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Dear Mr. Libby

Wonder Stories told for Children 1870

Stories and Tales. 1871

The Story of My Life 1871

Was edited and partly translated

by Mrs Seeddon.

In The Riverside Magazine

The Court Cards Jan 1869

Which was the Happiest March "

Lucky may be in a Pin April "

Sunshine Stories May "

The Comet June "

What one can Invent July "

What happened to the Thistle Oct "

Chicken Grethe's Family Novelle "

Spring Song June 1870
The Candles July "
Great Grandfather August "
The Most Extraordinary Thing Sept "

Were translated by Mr. Scudder.

Danish Popular Stories
The Days of the Week
The Dryad
Peter, Peter and Peer
The Greenies

I am not sure about.

Lucky Peer
in Jan. Feb. March. April 1871
Scribner's Monthly
was translated by Mr. Scudder

I suppose Mr. Scudder

had charge of the 10 vol.
edition of Hurd & Houghton
of which the three volumes
mentioned above are a
part.

Hoping this may help
you to answer the question
asked - I am -

Very truly yours
Grace S. Scudder

WONDER STORIES TOLD FOR CHILDREN

By HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

AUTHOR OF THE "IMPROVISATORE," ETC.

WITH

ILLUSTRATIONS BY V. PEDERSEN AND M. L. STONE

Author's Edition

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
The Court Cards	1
The Dryad	8
The Ugly Duckling	30
The Nis at the Grocer's	42
The Fir-tree	46
The Money-pig	55
The Swineherd	58
Jack the Dullard	65
The Lovers	70
The Swiftest Runners	73
The Travelling Companion	76
The Marsh-king's Daughter	99
Ole Shut-eye	138
The Bell's Hollow	151
Thumbling	157
The Wicked Prince	170
The Snow-queen	173
Pen and Inkstand	208
Little Claus and Big Claus	211
The Girl who trod upon Bread	225
The Emperor's new Clothes	234
The little Sea-maid	239
The Farm-yard Cock and the Weather-cock	263
The Elfin Mound	266
Soup made of a Sausage-stick	273
The Wild Swans	287
The Beetle	308
The Galoshes of Fortune	316
Twelve by the Mail	346
The Garden of Paradise	351
The Constant Tin Soldier	368
Sunshine Stories	373
The Stone of the Wise Men	378
The Daisy	393
The Snow Man	398

PAGE

THE NIGHTINGALE 404
THE SILVER SHILLING 416
THE NAUGHTY BOY 421
THE TOAD 424
THE STORKS 431
THE NIS AND THE DAME 437
THE NEIGHBORING FAMILIES 442
THE DARNING-NEEDLE 455
THE HAPPY FAMILY 459
THE SUMMER-GOWK 463
THE OLD HOUSE 467
IN THE DUCK-YARD 478
IN THE NURSERY 484
THE FLAX 488
THE SHADOW 493
THE RED SHOES 506
THE SNAIL AND THE ROSE-TREE 513
LITTLE IDA'S FLOWERS 516
THE FALSE COLLAR 524
THE LEAP-FROG 527
THE ANGEL 530
THE FLYING TRUNK 533
THE TINDER-BOX 539
THE BUCKWHEAT 547
THE BELL 550

ADVERTISEMENT.

In arranging the present series of Hans Christian Andersen's writings, it has been found impossible to bring into the compass of one volume, those shorter stories and tales which are usually classed as stories for children. Many of the tales, indeed, are not addressed to the minds of children primarily, yet there are very few which are foreign from their interest and appreciation. Accordingly it has been thought best to collect into two volumes all of Andersen's brief stories, tales, and rhapsodies, making the division correspond pretty nearly to that which seems to exist in the intention of the stories. Thus the present volume contains those compositions in which the element of wonder is especially prominent, the basis of very many of them being in the supernatural and superhuman. The other volume will contain those stories in which the basis is more matter-of-fact; but as in many of Andersen's stories the two elements of sense and supersense are both present, so much that would properly fall into this volume will be found, not altogether inappropriately, in the other. The two volumes together will hold all of the author's short stories, and thus if any one misses in this book certain favorites, he may be assured that they will appear in the companion volume.

WONDER STORIES

TOLD FOR CHILDREN.

THE COURT CARDS.

HOW many beautiful things may be cut out of and pasted on paper! Thus a castle was cut out and pasted, so large that it filled a whole table, and it was painted as if it were built of red stones. It had a shining copper roof, it had towers and a draw-bridge, water in the canals just like plate-glass, for it was plate-glass, and in the highest tower stood a wooden watchman. He had a trumpet, but he did not blow it.

The whole belonged to a little boy, whose name was William. He raised the draw-bridge himself and let it down again, made his tin soldiers march over it, opened the castle gate and looked into the large and elegant drawing-room, where all the court cards of a pack — Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs, and Spades — hung in frames on the walls, like pictures in real drawing-rooms. The kings held each a sceptre, and wore crowns; the queens wore veils flowing down over their shoulders, and in their hands they held a flower or a fan; the knaves had halberds and nodding plumes.

One evening the little boy peeped through the open castle gate, to catch a glimpse of the court cards in the drawing-room, and it seemed to him that the kings saluted him with their sceptres, that the Queen of Spades swung the golden tulip which she held in her hand, that the Queen of Hearts lifted her fan, and that all four queens graciously recognized him. He drew a little nearer, in order to see better, and that made him hit his head against the castle so that it shook. Then all the four knaves of Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs, and

Spades, raised their halberds, to warn him that he must not try to get in that way.

The little boy understood the hint, and gave a friendly nod; he nodded again, and then said: "Say something!" but the knaves did not say a word. However, the third time he nodded, the Knave of Hearts sprang out of the card, and placed himself in the middle of the floor.

"What is your name?" the knave asked the little boy. "You have clear eyes and good teeth, but your hands are dirty: you do not wash them often enough!"

Now this was rather coarse language, but, of course, not much politeness can be expected from a knave. He is only a common fellow.

"My name is William," said the little boy, "and the castle is mine, and you are my Knave of Hearts!"

"No, I am not. I am my king's and my queen's knave, not yours!" said the Knave of Hearts. "I am not obliged to stay here. I can get down off the card, and out of the frame too, and so can my gracious king and queen, even more easily than I. We can go out into the wide world, but that is such a wearisome march; we have grown tired of it; it is more convenient, more easy, more agreeable, to be sitting in the cards, and just to be ourselves!"

"Have all of you really been human beings once?" asked little William.

"Human beings!" repeated the Knave of Hearts. "Yes, we have; but not so good as we ought to have been! Please now light a little wax candle (I like a red one best, for that is the color of my king and queen); then I will tell the lord of the castle — I think you said you were the lord of the castle, did you not? — our whole history; but for goodness' sake, don't interrupt me, for if I speak, it must be done without any interruption whatever. I am in a great hurry! Do you see my king, I mean the King of Hearts? He is the oldest of the four kings there, for he was born first, — born with a golden crown and a golden apple. He began to rule at once. His queen was born with a golden fan; that she still has. They both were very agreeably situated, even from infancy. They did not have to go to school, they could play the whole

HARLEY

day, build castles, and knock them down, marshal tin soldiers for battle, and play with dolls. When they asked for buttered bread, then there was butter on both sides of the bread, and powdered brown sugar, too, nicely spread over it. It was the good old time, and was called the Golden Age ; but they grew tired of it, and so did I. Then the King of Diamonds took the reins of government ! "

The knave said nothing more. Little William waited to hear something further, but not a syllable was uttered ; so presently he asked, — " Well, and then ? "

The Knave of Hearts did not answer ; he stood up straight, silent, bold, and stiff, his eyes fixed upon the burning wax candle. Little William nodded ; he nodded again but no reply. Then he turned to the Knave of Diamonds ; and when he had nodded to him three times, up he sprang out of the card, in the middle of the floor, and uttered only one single word, —

" Wax candle ! "

Little William understood what he meant, and immediately lighted a red candle, and placed it before him. Then the Knave of Diamonds presented arms, for that is a token of respect, and said : —

" Then the King of Diamonds succeeded to the throne ! He was a king with a pane of glass on his breast ; also the queen had a pane of glass on her breast, so that people could look right into her. For the rest, they were formed like other human beings, and were so agreeable and so handsome, that a monument was erected in honor of them, which stood for seven years without falling. Properly speaking, it should have stood forever, for so it was intended ; but from some unknown reasons, it fell." Then the Knave of Diamonds presented arms, out of respect for his king, and he looked fixedly on his red wax candle.

But now at once, without any nod or invitation from little William, the Knave of Clubs stepped out, grave and proud, like the stork that struts with such a dignified air over the green meadow. The black clover-leaf in the corner of the card flew like a bird beyond the knave, and then flew back again, and stuck itself where it had been sticking before.

And without waiting for his wax candle, the Knave of Clubs spoke: —

"Not all get butter on both sides of the bread, and brown powdered sugar on that. My king and queen did not get it. They had to go to school, and learn what they had not learnt before. They also had a pane of glass on their breasts, but nobody looked through it, except to see if there was not something wrong with their works inside, in order to find, if possible, some reason for giving them a scolding! I know it; I have served my king and queen all my life-time; I know everything about them, and obey their commands. They bid me say nothing more to-night. I keep silent, therefore, and present arms!"

But little William was a kind-hearted boy, so he lighted a candle for this knave also, a shining white one, white like snow. No sooner was the candle lighted, than the Knave of Spades appeared in the middle of the drawing-room. He came hurriedly; yet he limped, as if he had a sore leg. Indeed, it had once been broken, and he had had, moreover, many ups and down in his life. He spoke as follows: —

"My brother knaves have each got a candle, and I shall also get one; I know that. But if we poor knaves have so much honor, our kings and queens must have thrice as much. Now, it is proper that my King of Spades and my Queen of Spades should have *four* candles to gladden them. An additional honor ought to be conferred upon them. Their history and trials are so doleful, that they have very good reason to wear mourning, and to have a grave-digger's spade on their coat of arms. My own fate, poor knave that I am, is deplorable enough. In one game at cards, I have got the nickname of '*Black Peter!*'[1] But alas! I have got a still uglier name, which, indeed, it is hardly the thing to mention aloud," and then he whispered, — "In another game, I have been nicknamed '*Dirty Mads!*'[2] I, who was once the King of Spades'

[1] *Black Peter* is the name of a game in Denmark, where it is called "*Sorte Peer*," the word *sorte* denoting black. When the cards are dealt, he who happens to get the Knave of Spades is all the evening nicknamed Black Peter by his fellow players, who paint his face black.

[2] *Dirty Mads* is another Danish game. *Mads* is a name almost exclusively in use amongst the peasantry.

Lord Chamberlain! Is not this a bitter fate? The history of my royal master and queen I will not relate; they don't wish me to do so! Little lord of the castle, as he calls himself, may guess it himself if he chooses, but it is very lamentable, — O, no doubt about that! Their circumstances have become very much reduced, and are not likely to change for the better, until we are all riding on the red horse higher than the skies, where there are no haps and mishaps!"

Little William now lighted, as the Knave of Spades had said was proper, three candles for each of the kings, and three for each of the queens; but for the King and Queen of Spades he lighted four candles apiece, and the whole drawing-room became as light and transparent as the palace of the richest emperor, and the illustrious kings and queens bowed to each other serenely and graciously. The Queen of Hearts made her golden fan bow; and the Queen of Spades swung her golden tulip in such a way, that a stream of fire issued from it. The royal couples alighted from the cards and frames, and moved in a slow and graceful minuet up and down the floor. They were dancing in the very midst of flames, and the knaves were dancing too.

But alas! the whole drawing-room was soon in a blaze; the devouring element roared up through the roof, and all was one crackling and hissing sheet of fire; and in a moment little William's castle itself was enveloped in flames and smoke. The boy became frightened, and ran off, crying to his father and mother, — "Fire, fire, fire! my castle is on fire!" He grew pale as ashes, and his little hands trembled like the aspen-leaf. The fire continued sparkling and blazing, but in the midst of this destructive scene, the following words were uttered in a singing tone: —

"Now we are riding on the red horse, higher than the skies! This is the way for kings and queens to go, and this is the way for their knaves to go after them!"

Yes! that was the end of William's castle, and of the court cards. William did not perish in the flames; he is still alive, and he washed his small hands, and said: "I am innocent of the destruction of the castle." And, indeed, it was not his fault that the castle was burnt down.

THE DRYAD:

A WONDER STORY OF THE TIME OF THE EXHIBITION IN PARIS, 1867.

WE are going to Paris to see the Exhibition.

Now we are there! It was a journey performed without witchcraft — we went by steam, in a ship, and on a country road. Our time is the time of wonder stories.

Now we are in the midst of Paris, in a large hotel. Flowers adorn the staircase, and soft carpets are spread over the steps. Our room is a pleasant one; the door to the balcony stands open, and we look out upon an open square. Down there lives Spring, who was driven to town in a wagon. He arrived at the same time with us; he came in the shape of a slender young chestnut-tree, with opening leaves. Look, how beautifully the tree is dressed in spring's elegant robe, finer than all the other trees on the square; one of them, I see, has just stepped out of the row of living trees, and there it lies with its roots torn up and thrown mercilessly upon the ground; here where this tree stood will the chestnut-tree be planted, and there it will grow.

As yet, the chestnut-tree stands erect upon the heavy cart which brought it here this very morning from the country, a distance of a good many miles. There it grew, and lived its young life close to an old oak. To this old oak was the pious old pastor wont to come and sit under its shading branches, and tell over and over again his stories to the listening children. The young chestnut-tree was, of course, among the listeners.

The Dryad within this tree was then yet a child; she could remember so far back, when the chestnut-tree was so small that it scarcely could peep over the grass-blades and other small plants. These were then as large as they ever would be, but the tree grew and became bigger every year, drinking air, and sunshine, and dew, and rain. Many times was it shaken and bent hither and thither by the powerful winds. This was a part of its education.

The Dryad was pleased with her life, and the company of the sunshine, and the songs of birds; yet the human voice she liked best, for she knew the language of men as well as that of the animals, butterflies, cock-chafers, and bumble-bees. Everything that could fly or creep paid her a visit, and every one of them that came would gossip. They talked about the farms, the village, the woods, the old castle, with its park: in that were dikes and canals, and down in their waters dwelled also living beings, that could fly, in their own way, under water from place to place, beings with a will and with skill, but they never said anything: they were too wise. The swallow, which had dived down into the water, told her of the pretty gold-fishes, the fat bream, the sturdy perch, and the old moss-grown crucian. The swallow gave a very fair description, but it is always much better to go and look for one's self.

But how could the Dryad ever be able to see all these things with her own eyes? She had to be satisfied with her view of the beautiful landscape, and to listen to the buzz of human industry as it passed by her. Charming as all this was, there was something better; and that was when the old pastor told of France there under that oak-tree, and of the great deeds done by men and women whose names are remembered through all time with admiration. The Dryad thus heard of the shepherdess Joan of Arc, of Charlotte Corday; she heard of times much farther back, and of Henry the Fourth and Napoleon I., yes, she even heard of the ability and greatness of our own time; she heard of names, every one of which resounded deep in the heart of the people. France is the world's country, the world's gathering-place of genius, with the Crater of Liberty in its midst.

The village children listened attentively, the Dryad not less so; she was a schoolmate of them all. In the shapes of the sailing clouds, she would see picture after picture of those things that she had heard about.

The cloud-heaven was her picture-book. She thought she was very happy in this beautiful France, yet she began to think that the birds and everything that could fly were much more favored by fate than she was Even a fly could look far beyond our Dryad's horizon Beautiful France was so exten-

sive, yet she could only see a very small portion of it. World wide was the extent of her lands, with their meadows, forests, and cities, and of the last, Paris was the most glorious, the mightiest! Thither the birds could fly, but not she.

There was then among the village children a little girl. She was very ragged and poor, but very fair to look upon for all that. And she was always singing and laughing, and she tied red flowers in her black hair.

"Don't go to Paris," said the good old pastor; "poor child, if you do go there, it will be your ruin!"

And yet she went. The Dryad thought very often of her; they both had the same longing and desire to see the great city.

Spring came, and summer came, autumn and winter passed by, and thus a few years went. The Dryad's tree produced its first chestnut blossoms, the birds were chirping and chatting about them in the brilliant sunlight.

Once it so happened that a grand carriage, with a noble lady in it, came driving that way: she herself drove the beautiful and fiery horses. A little footman in livery sat behind. The Dryad recognized her; the old pastor recognized her: he shook his head and said mournfully, — "Thou didst go there: it proved thy ruin, poor Mary!"

"She poor!" thought the Dryad; "it cannot be! What a change! She is dressed like a duchess: that's what she came to in the city of enchantment. O if I could only get there and live in all that splendor and magnificence! the light and glory of that city reaches even up to the skies — just above there where I know the city stands." And in that direction would the Dryad look every evening, all night. There she saw the brilliant streak of light along the horizon. In the bright and clear moonlight night she missed it very much, and missed the sailing clouds that pictured to her the great city and its history.

Children take to their picture-books. The Dryad took to her cloud-book — that was her book of thoughts. The balmy, cloudless sky was to her a blank leaf, and at this time she had not seen such a one for several days; it was summer time, with hot, sultry days, without a cooling breeze; every flower

every leaf was drooping, and men hung their heads. The clouds drew together and were lifted up, as it happened, at that corner where the night announced, with a brilliant sheen, "Here is Paris."

The clouds rolled up and above each other, forming themselves into mountains; they made their way through the air and spread themselves over the whole landscape as far as the Dryad could see. They were heaped in mighty blue-black boulders, layer above layer, rising high in the air, and then flashes of light came flying out from them. "These are also God our master's servants," had the old pastor said. And forth came a great, blue, brilliant light, a blaze of lightning, that tried to look like the sun himself; it shattered the boulders.

The lightning had struck down — struck the mighty old oak-tree, splitting it to the very roots, — shattered the crown, parted its stem. The old tree fell down: it fell as if spreading itself to receive the messenger of light. Not even the biggest gun could so roar through the air and over the land at the birth of a king's child, as the thunder did there at the decease of the old oak-tree, the king of the forest. Now the rain poured down, a refreshing breeze sprang up, the storm had passed, a sacred calm rested upon the country. The village people came gathering around the old oak, the venerable pastor spoke a few words in its praise, a painter drew a sketch of the old tree for a memento.

"Everything goes away," said the Dryad, "goes away, as the clouds go, never to return."

Never again came the pastor there. The roof of the school-house had fallen, the pulpit was broken. The children came no more, but autumn came, and winter came, and then also spring. During the whole of this time were the Dryad's eyes directed towards that spot where, every evening and night, far away on the horizon, Paris shone like a radiant belt. Out of Paris leaped locomotive after locomotive, one train after another, whistling and thundering, and that at all times. At all times of the day, in the evening, at midnight, did trains arrive, and out of these and into them did people from all the lands of the world crowd. A new wonder of the world had called hem to Paris. How did this wonder exhibit itself?

"A gorgeous flower of art and industry," they said, "has sprung up from the barren sands of the Champ de Mars. It is a giant sunflower, out of the leaves of which one can study geography, statistics, general information; become inspired by art and poetry, learn the greatness and products of every country." "A marvelous flower it is," said others; "a large lotus-plant, that spreads its green leaves, shot up in early spring, as widely as a threshing-floor. Summer will see it in all its glory, and the autumn storms will blow it away, that neither leaves nor roots will remain. In front of the military school stretches the arena of war in time of peace — a field without grass or flower, a piece of the desert cut out from a wilderness in Africa, where Fata Morgana shows her mysterious air castles and suspended gardens. There, upon the Champ de Mars, were they still more brilliant, more strange, than as visions only." "The palace of the modern Aladdin is erected," said others. "Day after day, hour after hour, does it unfold more and more of its new splendor."

The boundless halls shine in marble and colors. The giant with no blood in his veins, moves his steel and iron limbs here in that great outer circle.[1] Works of art, in metal and stone, loudly proclaim the powerful life of the mind that labors in all the lands of the world. Here is picture-gallery and flower-show; and everything that hand and mind can create in the workshops of the mechanic is here placed on exhibition. Even old castles and peat-bogs have contributed their relics of antiquity. The overpowering, gorgeous show must be pictured in miniature and squeezed into the compass of a toy before we can comprehend and see it in its entirety.

Upon the Champ de Mars stood, as upon a big Christmas table, Aladdin's castles of art and industry; around these castles were placed toys from every country, toys of grandeur; every nation found a memento of its home.

Here was the palace of the Egyptian king; there, a caravanserai from the desert. The Bedouin rode past: he came from the land of the sun; and here was a Russian stable, with beautiful, fiery horses, brought from the plains. There stood

[1] The machinery at the Exhibition was placed in the outer circle, and was kept in operation. — ED.

the small, straw-thatched Danish peasant-house, with its Danebrog's flag, neighbor to Gustavus Vasa's neat wooden cottage from Dalarne. American block-houses, English cottages, French pavilions, kiosks, churches, and theatres, were all spread about in a wonderful manner. And then, in the middle of all this, there was the green turf, there was clear running water, there were flowering shrubs, rare trees, glass houses where one might imagine one's self to be in a tropic forest. Complete rose-gardens, brought here from Damascus, bloomed in their glory under glass roofs. What colors, what fragrance! Stalactite caverns, artificially made, containing in fresh and salt water ponds specimens of various fishes; it was like standing on the shore of the ocean, among fishes, and reptiles, and polyps.

So they talked, and said that all these things were now exhibited on the Champ de Mars, and that all over this festive board crawled an immense crowd of human beings, like a swarm of ants on a journey; they either went on foot or were drawn in little wagons. Not every man's legs can stand the fatigues of such endless wandering.

From the earliest rays of dawn till late at night they are wandering to that field. Steamer after steamer, crowded full with men, glides down the river Seine. The crowd of carriages increases continually, the multitude of people on foot and on horseback increases, all public conveyances are crammed, are stuffed, are fringed over with human beings; and all these various streams move towards one goal — the Paris Exhibition.

Every entrance is decorated with a French flag, and all around the walls of the great bazaar for all countries float the flags of the different nations. A burring and a buzzing continually sounds from the hall of machines; down from the towers come the ring of chimes; organs sound their voices in the churches, mingled with the hoarse and nasal strains from the Oriental coffee-houses. It is all a Babel empire, a Babel language, a world's wonder.

I assure you that all this was really so; at least so the story goes, and who has not heard of it? The Dryad knew it all, she knew all that has here been said of the wonder of the

world in the great city of cities. "Hurry, all ye birds, fly thither and see, and then come back and tell me all about it," was the Dryad's prayer.

The longing grew till it became a wish, and that grew to be the thought of her life, and then —

The full moon was shining on that silent, solemn night, and from her dial there came forth (this the Dryad saw) a spark, bright, like a falling star, and it fell at the foot of the tree, whose branches began to shiver as if shaken by a gust of wind, and then there stood a shining being. It spoke with a voice as clear and loud as a dooms-day's trumpet, which kisses to life and calls to judgment. "Thou shalt become free to go to the city of enchantments; thou shalt there take root, get acquainted with the buzzing streams, the air, and the sunshine there, but thy life-time will be shortened; the long row of years that were awaiting thee here in God's open fields will shrink to a small sum. Poor Dryad, it will be thy ruin. Thy longing will grow, thy desire, thy craving become louder, the tree itself will become a prison to thee. Thou wilt leave thy shelter, cast off thy nature; thou wilt fly out and mix with men, and then thy years will shrivel into the half of a day-fly's life-time, to one night only. The light of thy life will be blown out, the tree will pine away, the leaves will wither, never to return."

Thus rang the words, thus sang the voice. and the shining being disappeared, but not the Dryad's longing and desire; she trembled in expectation, in a violent fever of anticipated enjoyment. With exultation she exclaimed, —

"Life is going to commence, floating, like the clouds, whither no one knows." At early dawn, when the moon grew pale and the skies red, came the time of fulfillment; the words of promise were to be verified. There came people armed with spades and pickaxes; they dug clear around the roots of the tree, they dug down right under them; then there came a cart drawn by two horses, and they lifted the tree with its roots and the earth they clung to out of the ground, and wound mats around them, making a warm foot-bag, and then they put the tree upon the cart and tied it securely, because it was now to go on a journey to Paris, and it was to stay there and grow in the great city of France, in the city of cities.

The branches and leaves of the chestnut-tree shook and trembled when they commenced digging. The Dryad trembled, but with the rapture of expectation.

"Forward, forward!" sounded every pulse beat. "Forward, forward!" rang the trembling words of desire. The Dryad forgot, in her happiness, to take leave of her homestead's surroundings, of the swaying grass-blades and the innocent daisies that had looked up to her as to a great lady in our Father's garden, a young princess that played shepherdess here in the country.

At last the chestnut-tree was upon the cart, nodding with its branches "farewell," or "forward." The Dryad knew it not; she only thought of and dreamed about the new unknown, and yet well-known, which should now unfold itself. No guileless heart of an innocent child was ever more filled with thought, than she was on her journey to Paris.

No farewell, but always, "Forward, forward!" The cart-wheels turned ceaselessly round and round, the far away grew into near by, and then was left behind. The country changed, as her clouds changed. New fields, woods, farms, villas, and gardens came in sight. The chestnut-tree moved on, the Dryad moved forwards with it. Locomotive after locomotive went dashing by her. The locomotives blew clouds that took shapes of beings, who spoke of Paris, the place they came from, whither the Dryad was going.

As a matter of course, everything around her knew what way she was going. She was aware that every tree that she passed stretched out its branches toward her and begged, "Take me along with you: take me also." There lives in every tree a longing Dryad.

What wonderful changes! It seemed as if the houses came springing right out of the ground, more and more, closer and closer. Chimney-pots came up, as if so many flower-pots had been placed behind one another and alongside each other upon the houseroofs. Large inscriptions, with letters a yard long, had the sorceress painted upon the walls; they reached to the roof and glittered brightly.

"Where does Paris begin, and when will I come to it?" thought the Dryad. Soon the crowd of people increased, the

tumult and noise grew louder. Carriage followed carriage, people went on foot and rode on horseback, and on each side of her were shops, and all about sounded music, song, talking, and screeching.

Now the Dryad, in her tree, had arrived in the middle of Paris.

The heavy cart stopped in an open place where some trees were planted ; all around were high houses ; every window had a balcony of its own, from which people looked down upon that young, fresh chestnut-tree which came driving in a cart ; it was destined to be planted there in the place of a dying, uprooted tree that lay outstretched upon the ground. People that came passing by stopped awhile, smiling upon that fresh, green piece of early spring. The older trees, whose leaves were yet scarcely budding, nodded their welcome to her with rustling branches : " Welcome, welcome ! " said they ; and the fountain which played with its water in the air, that fell prattling down again into the wide basin, permitted the wind to carry a few drops to the newly arrived tree, offering her a welcome drink.

Then the Dryad perceived how its tree was taken down from the cart and put in its place of destination. After that the roots were carefully covered with earth, and covered with fresh green sward. Shrubs were also planted, and earthen pots dug down with flowers in them.

And thus quite a nice garden appeared in the centre of the square. The uprooted and dying tree, filled with bad-smelling gas and drainage air, and all the rest of the plant-torturing air of the city, was thrown upon a cart and carried away. The crowd looked on, children and old people sat about in the green, looking through the fresh leaves. And we, that talk all about this, stood on the balcony, looking down upon the young tree just arrived from the fresh country air, and said what the old pastor would have said, had he been there, " Poor Dryad ! "

" Happy am I, and thrice happy," said the Dryad ; " and yet I cannot quite comprehend it. I cannot speak what I feel ; it seems all to be as I imagined it, and yet it is not quite what I thought it would be."

The houses were so high, so near. The sun only shone

upon one wall, and that was covered with handbills and placards, around which the people would crowd and throng. Carriages drove by, big and small, light and heavy : omnibuses, like moving houses, filled to overflowing, came rattling by. Drays and gigs insisted upon having the same right.

" But will not," thought the Dryad, — " will not these overgrown houses that stand so oppressively near, also take themselves off and make room for other shapes and forms, as the clouds of heaven do ? Why don't they slip aside, that I may get a glimpse into Paris, and far beyond Paris ? " She wanted to see Notre Dame, the Vendome Column, and the many works of wonder, that had called and were calling so many people there. But the houses would not move from their places. The lanterns were lit when it was yet quite daylight. Brilliant rays of gas came bursting forth from all the shop windows, and lighting up the trees and their branches, so that it almost looked like summer's sunlight. But the stars above looked exactly the same as the Dryad had seen them at home. She thought she felt a breeze, so pure and balmy. A feeling of new strength came over her, and she felt it communicated to the very tips of the leaves and roots. Now she knew that she was within the living world of men, looked upon with tender eyes ; there were tumult, tones, colors, and light all around her.

Wind instruments sent their tones to her from the cross streets ; hand-organs, with feet-stirring melodies, were indefatigable. Yes, to dance, to dance to pleasures and amusement did they invite. It was a music that might make men, horses, carriages, trees, and houses dance, if they only knew how. All this created an intoxicating desire for enjoyment in the Dryad's heart.

" What a blessed life I lead ! how beautiful this all is ! " exclaimed she in the highest glee : " I am in Paris."

The day that came, the night that followed, and then the next day, brought the same show, the same turmoil, the same life, changing, but always the same changes.

" By this time I really know every tree, every flower, on this place ; I know every house, balcony, and shop here, where

they have stuck me, in this little corner, in which I can see nothing of the great city. Where are the arches of triumph, the Boulevards, and that world's wonder? Nothing of all this am I able to see. I am imprisoned here among these high houses, which I know by heart, with their inscriptions, placards, handbills, and all the painted dainties, for which I have lost all appetite. Where is that of which I heard them speak, which I have known and longed for, and for which I wanted to come here? What have I got, what gained, what found? I long as I did before. I have a consciousness of a life I wish to lead. I want to be among the living and move with them; I want to fly like a bird, see and feel, and become like a human being: I would rather live but the half of a day, than spend a life of years in daily idleness, in which I sicken, sink, and fall, like a rush in a meadow. I want to sail along like the clouds, bathe in the sun of life, look down upon all below as the clouds do, and go away as they do, nobody knows whither."

This was the Dryad's sigh, going up in a prayer: —

"Take all my years of life; give me but the half of a day; set me free from my prison; grant me human life, human happiness, though it be but for a short time — for only this night, and punish me if thou wilt for my longing — for my inexpressible longing for life. Give me freedom, give me liberty, even if this dwelling of mine, this fresh and youthful tree, wither, be cut down, be converted into ashes, and blown about by the winds."

A rustling went through the branches of the tree; a strange sensation crept over it; the leaves shivered: it was as if sparks of fire were leaping forth from them; a gust of wind shook the crown of the tree; and then issued forth a being — the Dryad herself. Amazed, she found herself sitting beneath the green boughs, rich with leaves and lit up by a thousand gas flames from all around — sitting there, young and handsome as poor Mary, to whom it had been said, — "Alas! the great city will be thy ruin."

The Dryad sat at the foot of the tree, at the door of her house, which she had locked and then had thrown the key

away. So young, so handsome! The stars saw her, the stars were twinkling; the gas flames saw her, they were beaming, beckoning to her; how slender she was, and yet so strong; a child, and yet a young woman. Her dress was glossy like silk, green as the fresh leaves on the top of the tree. In her nut-brown hair stuck a half-opened flower of the chestnut-tree. She looked a very goddess of spring.

A moment there, and then she bounded off like a gazelle, off around the corner; she danced and skipped like the ray that is darted from a mirror, like the sunbeam thrown, now here, now there, according to the motion of the glass; and if one looked sharp, and was able to see what could be seen, he would have thought it marvelous. Whenever she rested awhile, the color of her dress and of her form was changed, according to the nature of the place where she stood and the lights that fell upon her.

She arrived on the Boulevards; there was a complete ocean of light from gas lamps, stores, and cafes. Here were rows of trees, young and slender, whose Dryads received their share of the artificial sunlight. The sidewalk seemed to be one large parlor, with tables containing all sorts of refreshments, from Champagne and Chartreux down to coffee and beer; here too were exhibitions of flowers, statues, and pictures, and there were books, and many other interesting things.

From the steps of the high houses she looked down upon the streams roaring along under the rows of trees. There was an ever-swelling and ebbing tide of rolling wagons, cabriolets, chariots, omnibuses, coaches, of men riding on horseback, and of marching regiments. Life and limb were in danger if any one attempted to cross to the other side. Now a blue light was shining brightest, then the gas-lights were most brilliant, and suddenly a rocket went up — whence? whither?

This must be the great highway of the world's great city. Now she listened to some delightful Italian music. Now to Spanish songs, accompanied by castanets; but the melodies from Minutet's musical box drowned every other sound, that stirring Cancan music which Orpheus never knew and the beautiful Helen never heard. I think the very wheelbarrows would have danced on their one wheel had they known how.

But the Dryad did dance; she whirled and soared, changing colors like a humming-bird in sunlight, for every house, with its interior, was reflected upon her.

As the glorious flower of the lotus, torn from its roots, is carried away by the river in its whirls, so was the Dryad rushed along, and when she stopped she changed into another form; therefore, nobody could follow, none recognize her. Everything passed by like cloud-pictures, face after face, of which she recognized none, and no familiar being of home appeared to her.

Before her mind came two beaming eyes: she thought at once of Mary, poor Mary! the handsome, gay child, with the red flowers in her black hair — was she not in the world's great city, rich and charming as she passed in the carriage the house of the pastor, the Dryad's own tree, and the old oak? Surely, she must be in this deafening uproar, perhaps had just alighted from that magnificent carriage waiting there. Brilliant carriages, with richly gallooned coachmen and servants, were drawn up in a row. The great folks alighting from them were all ladies — beautifully dressed ladies. They went through the open, trellised porch, ascended the broad and high steps that led into that imposing building with marble columns. Was this, perhaps, the great wonder of the world? And there Mary must surely be!

Sancta Maria! she heard singing there; clouds of frankincense were rolling forth from under the high arch, painted and gilt, where twilight reigned. It was the Church of the Madeleine.

Dressed all in black of the most costly material, made after the finest and latest fashion, the ladies of the aristocracy stepped over the polished floor. Coats of arms blazed forth from the clasps of magnificent prayer-books, and were embroidered upon strongly perfumed handkerchiefs lined with costly Brussels lace. A few of the women bent kneeling in silent prayers before the high altar, others went to the confessor's box. The Dryad felt very uneasy, as if she ought not to be in this place. It was the house of silence, the great hall of mystery and secrecy. Everything was spoken in whispers and confided in soundless words.

The Dryad became aware that she also was wrapped up in a black silken veil, resembling the other noble ladies of the empire. Was every one of them a child of longing and desire like herself?

A deep sigh was heard through the silence — deep and fraught with pain; whence came it — from the confessional, or from the bosom of the Dryad? She drew the veil closer about her. The breath she drew was church incense, not the fresh and moist air. She felt that this was not the place she longed for.

"Forward, forward! without rest; the insect of a day's life has no rest: her flight is her life."

The Dryad was out again under the gas chandeliers and fountains.

"Not all the jets from the fountain can wash away the blood of the innocents slain here."

These words were spoken. Here she heard strangers speak very loud and lively, which nobody dared to do in the great hall of secrecy from which the Dryad had just come.

She saw a big stone slab being turned — why, she did not understand; but she went near and looked down an opening into the depth of the earth. Down the descent they went, leaving the starlit sky, the brilliant gas flames, and all the living life.

"I am afraid! I dare not go down. I care little to see all the wonders there; stay here with me!"

"And go home?" said a man; "leave Paris without having seen the most remarkable thing, the wonder-work of modern times?" she heard voices say.

The Dryad heard and understood it. Now the goal of her greatest longing was reached at last, and here was the entrance, down to the deep, down, under Paris. This she could never have thought, but she saw it, and saw the strangers descend, and she followed.

The steps were made of cast-iron, spiral-shaped, broad, and comfortable; a lamp gave a dim light, and deeper down another. She found herself in a labyrinth of endless halls and vaults, crossing each other. All the streets and lanes of Paris

were clearly seen there, as if reflected in a looking-glass. One could read the names of them, and every house above had here its number, its root, that shot down under the lonely macadamized sidewalk, and was squeezing its course along a wide canal with its onward rolling drainage. Above this was the aqueduct of the fresh and running water, and again, above this, hung, like a net-work, gas pipes and telegraph wires. Further on shone lamps, as if they were refracted images from the world's city above. Now and then a rumbling noise was heard overhead; it came from the heavy wagons that drove over the bridges of descent.

Where was the Dryad?

You have heard of the catacombs: they are nothing compared to this world under ground, this wonder of our times, the Cloacas of Paris. There was the Dryad, and not in the World's Exhibition on the Champ de Mars.

Exclamations of astonishment, admiration, approbation, were heard all around.

"Out of the deep here," they said, "grows now health and long life for thousands above. Our time is the time of progress with all its blessings."

This was the opinion of men, men's talk, but not that of the scavengers that built, lived, and fed here — the rats; they piped from cracks in a piece of an old stone wall so distinctly as to be understood by the Dryad. A tall and old tail-bitten rat piped in a shrill voice his misgivings, his afflictions, and the only idea his mind held; and his whole family approved of every word he said.

"I am deeply oppressed by the miau, the human miau, of intolerable ignorance. No doubt everything is very fine now, with gas and petroleum; I do not eat such things. It has become so clean here now, and so light, that one sits and is ashamed, and don't know what one is ashamed of. I wish we lived in the good old times of the goblins; they are not so far back, those times, — those romantic times as they are called."

"What are you talking about?" asked the Dryad; "I have never seen you before. What are you speaking of?"

"Of the glorious old days!" said the rat; "great-grandfather and great-grandmother rat's time of youth. In those

times it was a great undertaking to come down here. That was the time for rats all over Paris! Pestmother used to dwell down here then: she killed men, but never rats. Robbers and smugglers hatched their plans here unmolested. Then this was the asylum for the most interesting characters I ever saw, personages that one only sees now upon the melodramatic stages. The romantic time has passed away, even with us rats; we have got fresh air — and petroleum."

In this strain did the rats pipe, — piped over the new times, piped in honor of the good old time with its pestmother.

By this time they came to a carriage, a sort of omnibus, drawn by two ponies. The company entered and drove along the Boulevard Sebastopol — that is, upon the one underground; right above in Paris was the well-known Boulevard, always overflowing with human beings.

The wagon disappeared in the twilight; the Dryad disappeared also, but came to light again under the glare of the gas flames in the open air. Here was the wonder to be found, and not in the crossing and recrossing vaults and their damp atmosphere; here she found the world's wonder which she had looked for during her short life-time. There it was, bursting forth in far richer glory than all the gas-lights above, much stronger than the moon, which was silently gliding along.

And she saw it greeting her, winking and twinkling, like Venus in the vault of heaven.

She observed a brilliant porch opening into a garden, filled with light and dance music. She saw artificial lakes and ponds, surrounded by water-plants artistically made of tinsel, bent and painted; they threw water-jets up in the air from their chalices, that sparkled like diamonds in the brilliant light. Graceful weeping willows — real, spring-clad, weeping willows — let their fresh green branches, like a transparent veil, hang in curving waves. A burning bowl among the shrubbery threw its red light over half-lit love bowers, through which magic tones of music rushed, thrilling the ears, fooling and alluring and chasing the blood through the limbs of human beings.

Young women did she see, beautiful, and in evening dress,

with confiding smiles on their lips, and with the carelessness of youth and laughing mirth. A "Mary," with roses in her hair, but without carriage or footman. How they rolled and swung in that wild dance! what was up, and what was down? They jumped, they laughed and smiled, as if bitten by a tarantula; they looked so happy, so gay, as if ready to embrace the whole world out of pure enjoyment.

The Dryad felt herself irresistibly drawn into the dance. Her small, delicate foot was encased in a silken shoe, chestnut-brown, like the ribbon that came fluttering from her hair, down upon her uncovered shoulders. The green skirt enveloped her in large folds, but did not hide the beautifully shaped legs and her pretty feet, that seemed intent upon describing the magic circle in the air, in front of her dancing cavalier's head. Was she in Armida's enchanted garden? What was the name of this palace? In blazing jets the gas flames outside said, — *Mabille.*

With shouts, clapping of hands, rockets, running water, together with popping of champagne bottles, the dance was bacchanalian; and then, above all this, in the serene sky, sailed the moon, a shining ship in the shape of a face. The sky was clear and pure, without a cloud, and one thought of looking right into heaven from Mabille.

A consuming, intoxicating sensation seized the Dryad, like the effect from opium. Her eyes talked, her lips spoke, but her words were not heard, drowned by the tones of flute and violin. Her cavalier whispered words in her ears, that rolled on with the time of the cancan; she understood them not, we do not understand them. He stretched his arms out toward her, around her, — and embraced only the transparent, gas-filled air. The Dryad was carried away by the wind, as he carries a rose-leaf; and when high in the air she saw a flame right ahead, a brilliant light, at the top of a tower. This light now surely came from the goal of her longing, shining from the red fire-tower upon the "Fata Morgana" of the Champ de Mars, and thither was she carried by the spring breeze. She whirled several times around that tower; the workmen thought it was a butterfly that came fluttering down to die, having left its chrysalis too early in spring.

The moon was shining, and so were the gas-lights and the lanterns in the large halls of the outspread buildings; they were shining upon the grass-covered hills, and upon the rocks put there by human skill, where waterfalls were precipitated by "Bloodless's" power. The depth of the ocean, and the fresh-water rivers, the empire of the fishes, were laid open here. One imagined oneself to be down at the bottom of the deep, — down in the ocean. in a diving-bell. The water pressed hard toward the thick glass walls. Polyps, fathom-long, flexible, eel-like, quivering, living thorns, whose arms took hold, swaying up and down, grown fast to the bottom of the sea.

A large flounder was lying close by in deep thought, spreading himself with great comfort. A crab was crawling over him, like a hideous monster-head; but the shrimps moved about swiftly and restlessly, as if they were ocean's moths and butterflies.

In the fresh-water aquaria grew many beautiful plants; gold fishes had arranged themselves in rows, like red cows on a pasture; they all poked their heads in one direction, for the purpose of getting the flow of the stream in their mouth. The thick and fat tenches were staring with their dull eyes at the glass walls; they knew they were in the Paris Exhibition; they knew they had made a fatiguing journey in vessels filled with water; that they had been on a railroad, had become land-sick, as men become sea-sick upon the ocean. They had also come to see the Exhibition, and they saw it from their own salt or fresh water, and looked upon the swarms of men, that passed by all day long, from morning to night. All the lands of the world had sent their human specimen there, in order that the old bream, the strong perch, and the moss-grown carps, might see these creatures, and give their opinion about these different tribes.

"Man is a scale-fish," said a small fish, "and changes his scales two or three times a day; they give mouth sounds, — speak, they call it. We do not change, and we make ourselves understood in a much easier way, by the motions of the corners of our mouths, and a stare with our eyes. We have many advantages over men."

"Yet they have learned how to swim," said a fresh-water fish. "I hail from the great inland lake, and there men go into the water during the hot summer days; but before they do this, they strip off their scales, and then they swim. The frogs have taught them to do that; the hind-legs push and the fore-legs row; but they cannot stand it long. They think they can resemble us, poor things; but it wouldn't do."

And the fishes stared; they imagined that the same crowd of people that they had seen come in at daylight, was still there; they really thought that those shapes were the same that beat upon their nerves of observation from the very first day.

A small perch, with a pretty tiger-skin, and an enviable round back, said he was assured that the mother of men was there; he had seen her.

"I have seen her also, and that very plainly," said a gold-colored tench. "She was a beautiful, well-shaped human being; she had our mouth-corners and staring eyes, two balloons in the back, a down hanging umbrella in front, a breathing curtain, and dingle dangle. I think, verily, she ought to throw off all that stuff, and go as we do, according to Nature's command; and then she would look like an honorable tench, that is, so far as man can be like us." [1]

"What has become of him — that laced one — the he-man?" they asked.

"He drove about in a chair, he sat there with paper, ink, and pen in his hands, and wrote everything down. What was he about? They called him a journalist."

"Look! there he is, driving yet," said a moss-grown old maid crucian, with a bit of the world's temptation sticking in her throat, so that she was quite hoarse. She once swallowed a fish-hook, and since that she is swimming about in humility, with the hook in her throat.

"Journalist!" said she: "that is said like a fish, and properly understood, it's a sort of cuttle-fish among men."

And thus the fishes went on talking in their own way. But within this artificial and water-filled cove, sounded yet the

[1] The Tench evidently saw a lady dressed in the height of the prevailing fashion. — ED.

blows of hammers and the songs of artisans; they had to make use of the night, in order to get everything ready soon. These were songs in the Dryad's summer night dreams; she herself stood there, again to fly away and disappear.

"There are gold-fishes!" she exclaimed, nodding at them. "I am glad to have been allowed to see them. Yes, I do know you, and have known you a long while! The swallow told me about you in my own country home. How pretty and shiny, and how charming you are! I could kiss you, every one of you! I know the others also; this must be a crucian, and that is the delicate bream, and there swims the old moss-covered carp. I know you, but you do not know me!"

The fishes stared; they understood her not; they gazed in their dim twilight.

The Dryad was gone; she was in the open air, where the wonder-flower of the world exhaled its fragrance from many lands: from the rye-bread land, from the cod-fish coast, the Russia-leather country, the eau de cologne river-bed, and rose-oil orient.

When, after a ball, we drive home in our carriage, the melodies we have heard continue to ring in our ears for some time; we may sing every one of them again, and, as in the slain man's eye the last impression which the eye had received remains photographed for some time, so remained yet the impress of the day's tumult and brilliancy upon the eye of night; it was neither absorbed nor blown away. The Dryad perceived it, and knew that it would thus continue to buzz quite into the morrow.

Now the Dryad was in the midst of fragrant roses; she thought she knew them, and that they were all from her own country; the roses from the castle's park and the pastor's garden.

She also recognized the red pomegranate; just such a one had Mary worn in her coal-black hair. The memory of her childhood's home in the country came twinkling in her thoughts; eagerly she drank in with her eyes the wonderful sights around her, while a feverish longing seized her, and

carried her through the marvelous halls. She felt tired, and the fatigue increased. She felt a strong desire to rest upon the soft, outspread oriental cushions, or dive into the pure water, as the branches of the weeping willows did.

But the insect of a day has no rest; a few minutes, and the day would close. Her thoughts quivered, her limbs trembled, she sank down in the grass beside the babbling water.

"Thou springest from the earth with true life," she said; "cool my tongue, give me a refreshing drink."

"I am no living brook," said the water. "I run by machine."

"Give me some of thy freshness, thou green grass," begged the Dryad; "give me one of thy fragrant flowers."

"We shall die, if we are torn from our plant," answered grass-blade and flower.

"Give me a kiss, thou cooling breeze; only a single kiss upon my lips!"

"The sun will soon kiss the clouds red," said the wind, "and then thou shalt be with the dead, gone, as all this magnificence will be gone before the year is out. And then I can again play with the light, loose sand upon this place, blow the dust all over the earth, dust in the air, and nothing but dust."

The Dryad felt an anguish coming over her, like the woman that, in a bath, having severed an artery, and bleeding to death, wishes still to live, while her strength, from loss of blood, leaves her. She got up, advanced a few paces, fell down again in front of a little church. The gate was open, light was burning on the altar, and the organ sang. What heavenly music! such tones had the Dryad never heard before, and yet she seemed to recognize well-known voices. They came from the depth of creation's great heart. She thought she heard the humming in the old oak-tree, and heard the old pastor talk of great deeds of men of great fame, and what God's creations might give to the coming time, would give, and therewith itself win eternal life. The organ's tones became stronger and louder; they sang, and spoke in the song: —

"Thy longing and desire tore thy roots from the place God had given them: it became thy ruin, poor Dryad!"

The organ's tones grew soft, and gentle ; they sang plaintively, and died away weeping. The clouds in the sky began to redden. The wind whispered and sang: "Go away, y' dead, the sun is rising."

His first ray fell upon the Dryad ; her figure was radiant, changing colors, like a soap-bubble just before it bursts, vanishes, becomes a drop, a tear, that falls upon the earth, and leaves nothing behind.

Poor Dryad, a dew-drop, only a tear, wept, and dried up!

The sun shone upon the Champ de Mars ; Fata Morgana shone over great Paris, over the little square, with a few trees and a prattling fountain ; over the high houses, where the chestnut-tree stood, its branches hanging, its leaves dried up, — the tree that only yesterday stood erect and fresh, resembling spring himself. "Now it is dead," said people ; the Dryad had left it, passed away like the clouds, none knows whither.

And low upon the earth there lay a withered, broken chestnut-flower. The holy water of the church could not recall it to life again. Man's foot soon stepped upon it, and crushed it in the dust.

All this has happened and been lived through. We ourselves have seen it, at the time of the Paris Exhibition, in 1867, — in our time, in the great and wonderful time of Fairy.

THE UGLY DUCKLING.

IT was so glorious out in the country; it was summer; the corn-fields were yellow, the oats were green, the hay had been put up in stacks in the green meadows, and the stork went about on his long red legs, and chattered Egyptian, for this was the language he had learned from his good mother. All around the fields and meadows were great forests, and in the midst of these forests lay deep lakes. Yes, it was right glorious out in the country. In the midst of the sunshine there lay an old farm, with deep canals about it, and from the wall down to the water grew great burdocks, so high that little children could stand upright under the loftiest of them. It was just as wild there as in the deepest wood, and here sat a Duck upon her nest; she had to hatch her ducklings; but she was almost tired out before the little ones came; and then she so seldom had visitors. The other ducks liked better to swim about in the canals than to run up to sit down under a burdock, and cackle with her.

At last one egg-shell after another burst open. "Piep! Piep!" it cried, and in all the eggs there were little creatures that stuck out their heads.

"Quack! quack!" they said; and they all came quacking out as fast as they could, looking all round them under the green leaves; and the mother let them look as much as they chose, for green is good for the eye.

"How wide the world is!" said all the young ones, for they certainly had much more room now than when they were in the eggs.

"D'ye think this is all the world?" said the mother. "That stretches far across the other side of the garden, quite into the parson's field; but I have never been there yet. I hope you are all together," and she stood up. "No, I have not all. The largest egg still lies there. How long is that to last? I am really tired of it." And she sat down again.

"Well, how goes it?" asked an old Duck who had come to pay her a visit.

"It lasts a long time with that one egg," said the Duck who sat there. "It will not burst. Now, only look at the others; are they not the prettiest little ducks one could possibly see? They are all like their father: the rogue, he never comes to see me."

"Let me see the egg which will not burst," said the old visitor. "You may be sure it is a turkey's egg. I was once cheated in that way, and had much anxiety and trouble with the young ones, for they are afraid of the water. Must I say it to you, I could not get them to venture in. I quacked and I clacked, but it was no use. Let me see the egg. Yes, that's a turkey's egg. Let it lie there, and teach the other children to swim."

"I think I will sit on it a little longer," said the Duck. "I've sat so long now that I can sit a few days more."

"Just as you please," said the old Duck; and she went away.

At last the great egg burst. "Piep! piep!" said the little one, and crept forth. It was very large and very ugly. The Duck looked at it.

"It's a very large duckling," said she; "none of the others look like that: can it really be a turkey chick? Well, we shall soon find out. It must go into the water, even if I have to thrust it in myself."

The next day, it was bright, beautiful weather; the sun shone on all the green trees. The Mother-Duck went down to the canal with all her family. Splash! she jumped into the water. "Quack! quack! she said, and one duckling after another plunged in. The water closed over their heads, but they came up in an instant, and swam capitally; their legs went of themselves, and they were all in the water. The ugly gray Duckling swam with them.

"No, it's not a turkey," said she; "look how well it can use its legs, and how straight it holds itself. It is my own child! On the whole it's quite pretty, if one looks at it rightly. Quack! quack! come with me, and I'll lead you out into the great world, and present you in the duck-yard; but keep close to me, so that no one may tread on you, and take care of the cats!"

And so they came into the duck-yard. There was a terrible riot going on in there, for two families were quarreling about an eel's head, and the cat got it after all.

"See, that's how it goes in the world!" said the Mother-Duck; and she whetted her beak, for she too wanted the eel's head. "Only use your legs," she said. "See that you can bustle about, and bow your heads before the old Duck yonder. She's the grandest of all here; she's of Spanish blood — that's why she's so fat; and d'ye see? she has a red rag round her leg; that's something particularly fine, and the greatest distinction a duck can enjoy: it signifies that one does not want to lose her, and that she's to be known by the animals and by men too. Shake yourselves — don't turn in your toes; a well brought-up duck turns its toes quite out, just like father and mother, — so! Now bend your necks and say 'Quack!'"

And they did so: but the other ducks round about looked at them, and said quite boldly, —

"Look there! now we're to have these hanging on, as if there were not enough of us already! And — fie! — how that Duckling yonder looks; we won't stand that!" And one duck flew up at it, and bit it in the neck.

"Let it alone," said the mother; "it does no harm to any one."

"Yes, but it's too large and peculiar," said the Duck who had bitten it; "and therefore it must be put down."

"Those are pretty children that the mother has there," said the old Duck with the rag round her leg. "They're all pretty but that one; that was rather unlucky. I wish she could bear it over again."

"That cannot be done, my lady," replied the Mother-Duck. "It is not pretty, but it has a really good disposition, and swims as well as any other; yes, I may even say it, swims better. I think it will grow up pretty, and become smaller in time; it has lain too long in the egg, and therefore is not properly shaped." And then she pinched it in the neck, and smoothed its feathers. "Moreover it is a drake," she said, "and therefore it is not of so much consequence. I think he will be very strong: he makes his way already."

"The other ducklings are graceful enough," said the old Duck. "Make yourself at home; and if you find an eel's head, you may bring it me."

And now they were at home. But the poor Duckling which had crept last out of the egg, and looked so ugly, was bitten and pushed and jeered, as much by the ducks as by the chickens.

"It is too big!" they all said. And the turkey-cock, who had been born with spurs, and therefore thought himself an emperor, blew himself up like a ship in full sail, and bore straight down upon it; then he gobbled and grew quite red in the face. The poor Duckling did not know where it should stand or walk; it was quite melancholy because it looked ugly, and was the butt of the whole duck-yard.

So it went on the first day; and afterwards it became worse and worse. The poor Duckling was hunted about by every one; even its brothers and sisters were quite angry with it, and said, "If the cat would only catch you, you ugly creature!" And the mother said, "If you were only far away!" And the ducks bit it, and the chickens beat it, and the girl who had to feed the poultry kicked at it with her foot.

Then it ran and flew over the fence, and the little birds in the bushes flew up in fear.

"That is because I am so ugly!" thought the Duckling; and it shut its eyes, but flew on further; and so it came out into the great moor, where the wild ducks lived. Here it lay the whole night long; and it was weary and downcast.

Towards morning the wild ducks flew up, and looked at their new companion.

"What sort of a one are you?" they asked; and the Duckling turned in every direction, and bowed as well as it could. "You are remarkably ugly!" said the Wild Ducks. "But that is nothing to us, so long as you do not marry into our family."

Poor thing! it certainly did not think of marrying, and only hoped to obtain leave to lie among the reeds and drink some of the swamp water.

Thus it lay two whole days; then came thither two wild geese, or, properly speaking, two wild ganders. It was not long since each had crept out of an egg, and that's why they were so saucy.

"Listen, comrade," said one of them. "You're so ugly that I like you. Will you go with us, and become a bird of passage? Near here, in another moor, there are a few sweet lovely wild geese, all unmarried, and all able to say 'Rap?" You've a chance of making your fortune, ugly as you are."

"Piff! paff!" resounded through the air; and the two ganders fell down dead in the swamp, and the water became blood red. "Piff! paff!" it sounded again, and the whole flock of wild geese rose up from the reeds. And then there was another report. A great hunt was going on. The sportsmen were lying in wait all round the moor, and some were even sitting up in the branches of the trees, which spread far over the reeds. The blue smoke rose up like clouds among the dark trees, and was wafted far away across the water; and the hunting dogs came — splash, splash! — into the swamp, and the rushes and the reeds bent down on every side. That was a fright for the poor Duckling! It turned its head, and put it under its wing; but at that moment a frightful great dog stood close by the Duckling. His tongue hung far out of his mouth, and his eyes gleamed horrible and ugly; he thrust out his nose close against the Duckling, showed his sharp teeth and — splash, splash! — on he went, without seizing it.

"O, Heaven be thanked!" sighed the Duckling. "I am so ugly, that even the dog does not like to bite me!"

And so it lay quite quiet, while the shots rattled through the

reeds and gun after gun was fired. At last, late in the day, all was still; but the poor Duckling did not dare to rise up; it waited several hours before it looked round, and then hastened away out of the moor as fast as it could. It ran on over field and meadow; there was such a storm raging that it was difficult to get from one place to another.

Towards evening the Duck came to a little miserable peasant's hut. This hut was so dilapidated that it did not itself know on which side it should fall; and that's why it remained standing. The storm whistled round the Duckling in such a way that the poor creature was obliged to sit down, to stand against it; and the wind blew worse and worse. Then the Duckling noticed that one of the hinges of the door had given way, and the door hung so slanting that the Duckling could slip through the crack into the room; and that is what it did.

Here lived a woman, with her Cat and her Hen. And the Cat, whom she called Sonnie, could arch his back and purr, he could even give out sparks; but for that one had to stroke his fur the wrong way. The Hen had quite little short legs, and therefore she was called Chickabiddy Shortshanks; she laid good eggs, and the woman loved her as her own child.

In the morning the strange Duckling was at once noticed, and the Cat began to purr and the Hen to cluck.

"What's this?" said the woman, and looked all round; but she could not see well, and therefore she thought the Duckling was a fat duck that had strayed. "This is a rare prize!" she said. "Now I shall have duck's eggs. I hope it is not a drake. We must try that."

And so the Duckling was admitted on trial for three weeks; but no eggs came. And the Cat was master of the house and the Hen was the lady, and always said "We and th world!" for she thought they were half the world, and by fa. the better half. The Duckling thought one might have a different opinion, but the Hen would not allow it.

"Can you lay eggs?" she asked.

"No."

"Then will you hold your tongue!"

And the Cat said, "Can you curve your back, and purr, and give out sparks?"

"No."

"Then you will please have no opinion of your own when sensible folks are speaking."

And the Duckling sat in a corner and was melancholy; then the fresh air and the sunshine streamed in; and it was seized with such a strange longing to swim on the water, that it could not help telling the Hen of it.

"What are you thinking of?" cried the Hen. "You have nothing to do, that's why you have these fancies. Lay eggs, or purr, and they will pass over."

"But it is so charming to swim on the water!" said the Duckling, "so refreshing to let it close above one's head, and to dive down to the bottom."

"Yes, that must be a mighty pleasure, truly," quoth the Hen. "I fancy you must have gone crazy. Ask the Cat about it, — he's the cleverest animal I know, — ask him if he likes to swim on the water, or to dive down: I won't speak about myself. Ask our mistress, the old woman; no one in the world is cleverer than she. Do you think she has any desire to swim, and to let the water close above her head?"

"You don't understand me," said the Duckling.

"We don't understand you? Then pray who is to understand you? You surely don't pretend to be cleverer than the Cat and the woman — I won't say anything of myself. Don't be conceited, child, and thank your Maker for all the kindness you have received. Did you not get into a warm room, and have you not fallen into company from which you may learn something? But you are a chatterer, and it is not pleasant to associate with you. You may believe me, I speak for your good. I tell you disagreeable things, and by that one may always know one's true friends! Only take care that you learn to lay eggs, or to purr, and give out sparks!"

"I think I will go out into the wide world," said the Duckling

"Yes, do go," replied the Hen.

And so the Duckling went away. It swam on the water, and dived, but it was slighted by every creature because of its ugliness.

Now came the autumn. The leaves in the forest turned

yellow and brown; the wind caught them so that they danced about, and up in the air it was very cold. The clouds hung low, heavy with hail and snow-flakes, and on the fence stood the raven, crying, "Croak! croak!" for mere cold; yes, it was enough to make one feel cold to think of this. The poor little Duckling certainly had not a good time. One evening — the sun was just setting in his beauty — there came a whole flock of great, handsome birds out of the bushes; they were dazzlingly white, with long, flexible necks; they were swans. They uttered a very peculiar cry, spread forth their glorious great wings, and flew away from that cold region to warmer lands, to fair open lakes. They mounted so high, so high! and the ugly Duckling felt quite strangely as it watched them. It turned round and round in the water like a wheel, stretched out its neck towards them, and uttered such a strange, loud cry as frightened itself. O! it could not forget those beautiful, happy birds; and so soon as it could see them no longer, it dived down to the very bottom, and when it came up again, it was quite beside itself. It knew not the name of those birds, and knew not whither they were flying; but it loved them more than it had ever loved any one. It was not at all envious of them. How could it think of wishing to possess such loveliness as they had? It would have been glad if only the ducks would have endured its company — the poor, ugly creature!

And the winter grew cold, very cold! The Duckling was forced to swim about in the water, to prevent the surface from freezing entirely; but every night the hole in which it swam about became smaller and smaller. It froze so hard that the icy covering crackled again; and the Duckling was obliged to use its legs continually to prevent the hole from freezing up. At last it became exhausted, and lay quite still, and thus froze fast into the ice.

Early in the morning a peasant came by, and when he saw what had happened, he took his wooden shoe, broke the ice-crust to pieces, and carried the Duckling home to his wife. Then it came to itself again. The children wanted to play with it; but the Duckling thought they wanted to hurt it, and in its terror fluttered up into the milk-pan, so that the milk

spurted down into the room. The woman clasped her hands, at which the Duckling flew down into the butter-tub, and then into the meal-barrel and out again. How it looked then! The woman screamed, and struck at it with the fire-tongs; the children tumbled over one another in their efforts to catch the Duckling; and they laughed and they screamed! — well it was that the door stood open, and the poor creature was able to slip out between the shrubs into the newly-fallen snow — there it lay quite exhausted.

But it would be too melancholy if I were to tell all the misery and care which the Duckling had to endure in the hard winter. It lay out on the moor among the reeds, when the sun began to shine again and the larks to sing: it was a beautiful spring.

Then all at once the Duckling could flap its wings: they beat the air more strongly than before, and bore it strongly away; and before it well knew how all this happened, it found itself in a great garden, where the elder-trees smelt sweet, and bent their long green branches down to the canal that wound through the region. O, here it was so beautiful, such a gladness of spring! and from the thicket came three glorious white swans; they rustled their wings, and swam lightly on the water. The Duckling knew the splendid creatures, and felt oppressed by a peculiar sadness.

"I will fly away to them, to the royal birds! and they will beat me, because I, that am so ugly, dare to come near them. But it is all the same. Better to be killed by *them* than to be pursued by ducks, and beaten by fowls, and pushed about by the girl who takes care of the poultry yard, and to suffer hunger in winter!" And it flew out into the water, and swam towards the beautiful swans: these looked at it, and came sailing down upon it with outspread wings. "Kill me!" said the poor creature, and bent its head down upon the water, expecting nothing but death. But what was this that it saw in the clear water? It beheld its own image; and, lo! it was no longer a clumsy dark-gray bird, ugly and hateful to look at, but a — swan!

It matters nothing if one is born in a duck-yard, if one has only lain in a swan's egg.

It felt quite glad at all the need and misfortune it had suffered, now it realized its happiness in all the splendor that surrounded it. And the great swans swam round it, and stroked it with their beaks.

Into the garden came little children, who threw bread and corn into the water; and the youngest cried, "There is a new one!" and the other children shouted joyously, "Yes, a new one has arrived!" And they clapped their hands and danced about, and ran to their father and mother; and bread and cake were thrown into the water; and they all said, "The new one is the most beautiful of all! so young and handsome!" and the old swans bowed their heads before him.

Then he felt quite ashamed, and hid his head under his wings, for he did not know what to do; he was so happy, and yet not at all proud. He thought how he had been persecuted and despised; and now he heard them saying that he was the most beautiful of all birds. Even the elder-tree bent its branches straight down into the water before him, and the sun shone warm and mild. Then his wings rustled, he lifted his slender neck, and cried rejoicingly from the depths of his heart, —

"I never dreamed of so much happiness when I was the Ugly Duckling!"

THE NIS AT THE GROCER'S.

THERE was once a Student — a proper Student; he lived in an attic, and owned just nothing at all. There was also a Grocer — a proper Grocer; he lived in a comfortable room, and owned the whole house. So the Nis[1] clung to the Grocer, for the Grocer could give him, every Christmas Eve, a bowl of groats, with such a great lump of butter in it! The Student could not afford him that; so the Nis dwelt in the shop, and was right comfortable there.

One evening the Student came by the back-door into the shop to buy candles and cheese; he had no servant to send, and so he came himself. They gave him what he wanted, he paid the money, and the Grocer, and Madam, his wife — she was a woman! she had uncommon gifts of speech! — both nodded "Good evening" to him. The Student nodded in return, and was turning away, when his eye fell upon something that was printed on the paper in which his cheese was wrapped, and he stood still to read it. It was a leaf torn out of an old book, a book that ought never to have been torn up, a book full of rare old poetry.

"Plenty more, if you like it," quoth the Grocer; "I gave an old woman some coffee-beans for it; you shall have the whole for eight skillings."[2]

"Thank you," said the Student, "let me have it instead of the cheese, I can very well sup off bread and butter, and it would be a sin and a shame for such a book as this to be torn up into scraps. You are an excellent man, a practical man, but as for poetry, you have no more taste for it than that tub!"

Now this speech sounded somewhat rudely, but it was spoken in jest; the Student laughed, and the Grocer laughed too. But the Nis felt extremely vexed that such a speech should be made to a Grocer who was a householder and sold the best butter.

[1] The Nis of Denmark and Norway is the same imaginary being that is called Brownie in Scotland, and Kobold in Germany. He is represented as a dwarf, dressed in gray, with a pointed red cap.

[2] A skilling is a small Danish coin, in value a little less than a cent.

So when night was come, the shop shut up, and all, except the Student, were gone to bed, the Nis stole away Madam's tongue — she did not want it while she slept. And now whatever object he put it upon not only received forthwith the faculty of speech, but was able to express its thoughts and feelings to the full as well as Madam herself. Fortunately the tongue could be in only one place at a time, otherwise there would have been a rare tumult and chattering in the shop, all speaking at once.

And the Nis put the tongue on the tub wherein all the old newspapers lay. "Is it really true," he asked, "that you do not know what poetry is?"

"Don't I know!" replied the Tub; "it is something that is put into the newspapers to fill them up. I should think I have more of it in me than the Student has, though I am only a Tub at the Grocer's!"

And the Nis put the tongue on the coffee-mill, — O, how bravely it worked then! — and he put it on the money-box and on sundry other articles; and he asked them all the same question, and all gave much the same answer; all were of the same opinion, and the opinion of the multitude must be respected.

"Now for the Student!" and the Nis glided very softly up the back-stairs leading to the Student's attic. There was light within, and the Nis peeped through the key-hole to see what the Student was about. He was reading in his new-found treasure, the torn old book. But O how glorious! A bright sunbeam, as it were, shot out from the book, expanding itself into a mighty, broad-stemmed tree, which raised itself on high and spread its branches over the student. Every leaf on the tree was fresh and green, every flower was like a graceful, girlish head,— the faces of some lit up with eyes dark, thrilling, and passionate, and others animated by serene blue orbs, gentle as an angel's. And every fruit was like a glittering star, and such delicious melody was wafted around!

No, such glory and beauty as this never could the little Nis have imagined. And, mounted on tiptoe, he stood peeping and peeping, till at last the bright light within died away, till the Student blew out his lamp and went to bed. Nor even

then could little Nis tear himself away, for soft, sweet music still floated around, lulling the Student to rest.

"This is beyond compare!" exclaimed the little Nis; "this could I never have anticipated! I believe I will stay with the Student henceforth." But he paused, and reflected, and reasoned coolly with himself, and then he sighed, "The Student has no groats to give me." So down he went; yes, back he went to the Grocer's; and it was well that he did, for the Tub had, meantime, nearly worn out Madam's tongue, by giving out through one ring all that was rumbling within it, and was just on the point of turning in order to give out the same through the other ring when the Nis came and took the tongue back to Madam. But from that time forward, the whole shop, from the cash box down to the pinewood fagots, formed their opinion from that of the Tub; and they all had such confidence in it, and treated it with so much respect, that when the Grocer read aloud in the evening art and the stage criticism from the "Times," they all thought it was the Tub's doings.

But the little Nis was no longer content to stay quietly in the shop, listening to all the wit and wisdom to be gathered there; no, as soon as ever the lamp gleamed from the attic-chamber he was gone; that slight thread of lamp-light issuing from under the Student's door acted upon him as it were a strong anchor-rope drawing him upward; he must away to peep through the key-hole. And then he felt a tumult of pleasure within him, a feeling such as we all have known while gazing on the glorious sea when the Angel of the Storm is passing over it; and then he would burst out weeping, he knew not why, but they were happy, blessed tears. O, delightful beyond conception would it have been to sit with the Student under the tree! but that would be too much happiness; content was he and right glad of the key-hole. And there he would stand for hours in the draughty passage, with the bleak autumn-wind blowing down from the trap-door in the roof full upon him; but the enthusiastic little spirit never heeded the cold, nor, indeed, felt it at all until the light in the attic had been extinguished, and the sweet music had died away in the mournful night-wind. Ugh! then he did shake

and shiver, and crept back into his comfortable warm corner. And when Christmas Eve came, and the great lump of butter in his groats — ah! then he felt that the Grocer was his master, after all!

But one midnight the Nis was awaked by a terrible rat-tat upon the window-shutters; a crowd of people outside were shouting with all their might and main; the watchman was sounding his alarum; the whole street was lit up with a blaze of flame. Fire! where was it? at the Grocer's, or next door? The tumult was beyond description. Madam, in her bewilderment, took her gold ear-rings off her ears and put them in her pocket, by way of saving something; the Grocer was in a state of excitement about his bonds, the maid wild for her silk mantilla. Every one would fain rescue whatsoever he deemed most precious; so would the little Nis. In two bounds he was up-stairs, in the attic. The Student was standing at the open window, calmly admiring the fire, which was in the neighbor's house, not theirs; the marvelous book lay on the table, the little Nis seized it, put it into his red cap, and held it aloft with both hands: the most precious thing the house possessed was saved! Away he darted with it, sprang upon the roof, and in a second was seated on the chimney-pot, the glorious raging flames like a halo around him, both hands grasping firmly the little red cap wherein lay his treasure. And now he knew where his heart was, felt that the Student was really his master; but when the fire was extinguished, and he recovered his senses, — what then? "I will divide my allegiance between them," quoth he; "I cannot quite give up the Grocer, because of my bowl of groats."

Now this was really quite human. The rest of us stick to the Grocer — for groats.

THE FIR-TREE.

OUT in the woods stood a nice little Fir-tree. The place he had was a very good one ; the sun shone on him ; as to fresh air, there was enough of that, and round him grew many large-sized comrades, pines as well as firs. But the little Fir wanted so very much to be a grown-up tree.

He did not think of the warm sun and of the fresh air ; he did not care for the little cottage-children that ran about and prattled when they were in the woods looking for wild strawberries. The children often came with a whole pitcher full of berries, or a long row of them threaded on a straw, and sat down near the young Tree and said, "O, how pretty he is! what a nice little fir!" But this was what the Tree could not bear to hear.

At the end of a year he had shot up a good deal, and after another year he was another long bit taller ; for with fir-trees one can always tell by the shoots how many years old they are.

"O, were I but such a high tree as the others are," sighed he. "Then I should be able to spread out my branches, and with the tops to look into the wide world! Then would the birds build nests among my branches ; and when there was a breeze, I could bend with as much stateliness as the others!"

Neither the sunbeams, nor the birds, nor the red clouds which morning and evening sailed above him, gave the little Tree any pleasure.

In winter, when the snow lay glittering on the ground, a hare would often come leaping along, and jump right over the little Tree. O, that made him so angry! But two winters were past, and in the third the Tree was so large that the hare was obliged to go round it. "To grow and grow, to get older and be tall," thought the Tree, — "that, after all, is the most delightful thing in the world!"

In autumn the wood-cutters always came and felled some of the largest trees. This happened every year; and the young Fir-tree, that had now grown to a very comely size, trembled at the sight; for the magnificent great trees fell to the earth with noise and cracking, the branches were lopped off, and the trees looked long and bare: they were hardly to be recognized; and then they were laid in carts, and the horses dragged them out of the wood.

Where did they go to? What became of them?

In spring, when the Swallows and the Storks came, the Tree asked them, "Don't you know where they have been taken? Have you not met them anywhere?"

The Swallows did not know anything about it; but the Stork looked musing, nodded his head, and said, "Yes; I think I know; I met many ships as I was flying hither from Egypt; on the ships were magnificent masts, and I venture to assert that it was they that smelt so of fir. I may congratulate you, for they lifted themselves on high most majestically!"

"O, were I but old enough to fly across the sea! But how does the sea look in reality? What is it like?"

"That would take a long time to explain," said the Stork, and with these words off he went.

"Rejoice in thy growth!" said the Sunbeams, "rejoice in thy vigorous growth, and in the fresh life that moveth within thee!"

And the Wind kissed the Tree, and the Dew wept tears over him; but the Fir understood it not.

When Christmas came, quite young trees were cut down; trees which often were not even as large or of the same age as

this Fir-tree, who could never rest, but always wanted to be off. These young trees, and they were always the finest looking, retained their branches; they were laid on carts, and the horses drew them out of the wood.

"Where are they going to?" asked the Fir. "They are not taller than I; there was one indeed that was considerably shorter;—and why do they retain all their branches? Whither are they taken?"

"We know! we know!" chirped the Sparrows. "We have peeped in at the windows in the town below! We know whither they are taken! The greatest splendor and the greatest magnificence one can imagine await them. We peeped through the windows, and saw them planted in the middle of the warm room, and ornamented with the most splendid things, — with gilded apples, with gingerbread, with toys, and many hundred lights!"

"And then?" asked the Fir-tree, trembling in every bough. "And then? What happens then?"

"We did not see anything more: it was incomparably beautiful."

"I would fain know if I am destined for so glorious a career," cried the Tree, rejoicing. "That is still better than to cross the sea! What a longing do I suffer! Were Christmas but come! I am now tall, and my branches spread like the others that were carried off last year! O, were I but already on the cart! Were I in the warm room with all the splendor and magnificence! Yes; then something better, something still grander, will surely follow, or wherefore should they thus ornament me? Something better, something still grander, *must* follow — but what? O, how I long, how I suffer! I do not know myself what is the matter with me!"

"Rejoice in our presence!" said the Air and the Sunlight; "rejoice in thy own fresh youth!"

But the Tree did not rejoice at all; he grew and grew, and was green both winter and summer. People that saw him said, "What a fine tree!" and towards Christmas he was one of the first that was cut down. The axe struck deep into the very pith; the tree fell to the earth with a sigh: he felt a pang — it was like a swoon; he could not think of happiness, for he

was sorrowful at being separated from his home, from the place where he had sprung up. He well knew that he should never see his dear old comrades, the little bushes and flowers around him, any more ; perhaps not even the birds ! The departure was not at all agreeable.

The Tree only came to himself when he was unloaded in a court-yard with the other trees, and heard a man say, " That one is splendid ! we don't want the others." Then two servants came in rich livery and carried the Fir-tree into a large and splendid drawing-room. Portraits were hanging on the walls, and near the white porcelain stove stood two large Chinese vases with lions on the covers. There, too, were large easy-chairs, silken sofas, large tables full of picture-books, and full of toys worth hundreds and hundreds of crowns — at least the children said so. And the Fir-tree was stuck upright in a cask that was filled with sand : but no one could see that it was a cask, for green cloth was hung all round it, and it stood on a large gayly-colored carpet. O, how the tree quivered ! What was to happen ? The servants, as well as the young ladies, decorated it. On one branch there hung little nets cut out of colored paper, and each net was filled with sugar-plums ; and among the other boughs gilded apples and walnuts were suspended, looking as though they had grown there, and little blue and white tapers were placed among the leaves. Dolls that looked for all the world like men — the Tree had never beheld such before — were seen among the foliage, and at the very top a large star of gold tinsel was fixed. It was really splendid — beyond description splendid.

" This evening ! " said they all ; " how it will shine this evening ! "

" O," thought the Tree, " if the evening were but come ! If the tapers were but lighted ! And then I wonder what will happen ! Perhaps the other trees from the forest will come to look at me ! Perhaps the sparrows will beat against the window-panes ! I wonder if I shall take root here, and winter and summer stand covered with ornaments !

He knew very much about the matter ! but he was so impatient that for sheer longing he got a pain in his back, and this with trees is the same thing as a headache with us.

The candles were now lighted. What brightness! What splendor! The Tree trembled so in every bough that one of the tapers set fire to the foliage. It blazed up splendidly.

"Help! help!" cried the young ladies, and they quickly put out the fire.

Now the Tree did not even dare tremble. What a state he was in! He was so uneasy lest he should lose something of his splendor, that he was quite bewildered amidst the glare and brightness; when suddenly both folding-doors opened, and a troop of children rushed in as if they would upset the Tree. The older persons followed quietly; the little ones stood quite still. But it was only for a moment; then they shouted so that the whole place reëchoed with their rejoicing; they danced round the Tree, and one present after the other was pulled off.

"What are they about?" thought the Tree. "What is to happen now!" And the lights burned down to the very branches, and as they burned down they were put out one after the other, and then the children had permission to plunder the Tree. So they fell upon it with such violence that all its branches cracked; if it had not been fixed firmly in the cask, it would certainly have tumbled down.

The children danced about with their beautiful playthings: no one looked at the Tree except the old nurse, who peeped between the branches; but it was only to see if there was a fig or an apple left that had been forgotten.

"A story! a story!" cried the children, drawing a little fat man towards the Tree. He seated himself under it, and said, "Now we are in the shade, and the Tree can listen too. But I shall tell only one story. Now which will you have; that about Ivedy-Avedy, or about Klumpy-Dumpy who tumbled down-stairs, and yet after all came to the throne and married the princess?"

"Ivedy-Avedy," cried some; "Klumpy-Dumpy," cried the others. There was such a bawling and screaming!—the Fir-tree alone was silent, and he thought to himself, "Am I not to bawl with the rest?—am I to do nothing whatever?" for he was one of the company, and had done what he had to do.

And the man told about Klumpy-Dumpy that tumbled down, who notwithstanding came to the throne, and at last married

the princess. And the children clapped their hands, and cried out, "O, go on! Do go on!" They wanted to hear about Ivedy-Avedy too, but the little man only told them about Klumpy-Dumpy. The Fir-tree stood quite still and absorbed in thought: the birds in the wood had never related the like of this. "Klumpy-Dumpy fell down-stairs, and yet he married the princess! Yes, yes! that's the way of the world!" thought the Fir-tree, and believed it all, because the man who told the story was so good-looking. "Well, well! who knows, perhaps I may fall down-stairs too, and get a princess as wife!" And he looked forward with joy to the morrow, when he hoped to be decked out again with lights, playthings, fruits, and tinsel.

"I won't tremble to-morrow!" thought the Fir-tree. "I will enjoy to the full all my splendor! To-morrow I shall hear again the story of Klumpy-Dumpy, and perhaps that of Ivedy-Avedy too." And the whole night the Tree stood still and in deep thought.

In the morning the servant and the housemaid came in.

"Now then the splendor will begin again," thought the Fir. But they dragged him out of the room, and up the stairs into the loft; and here in a dark corner, where no daylight could enter, they left him. "What's the meaning of this?" thought the Tree. "What am I to do here? What shall I hear now, I wonder?" And he leaned against the wall lost in reverie. Time enough had he too for his reflections; for days and nights passed on, and nobody came up; and when at last somebody did come, it was only to put some great trunks in a corner out of the way. There stood the Tree quite hidden; it seemed as if he had been entirely forgotten.

"'Tis now winter out-of-doors!" thought the Tree. "The earth is hard and covered with snow; men cannot plant me now, and therefore I have been put up here under shelter till the spring-time comes! How thoughtful that is! How kind man is, after all! If it only were not so dark here, and so terribly lonely! Not even a hare. And out in the woods it was so pleasant, when the snow was on the ground, and the hare leaped by; yes — even when he jumped over me; but I did not like it then. It is really terribly lonely here!"

"Squeak! squeak!" said a little Mouse at the same moment, peeping out of his hole. And then another little one

came. They snuffed about the Fir-tree, and rustled among the branches.

"It is dreadfully cold," said the Mouse. "But for that, it would be delightful here, old Fir, wouldn't it?"

"I am by no means old," said the Fir-tree. "There's many a one considerably older than I am."

"Where do you come from," asked the Mice; "and what can you do?" They were so extremely curious. "Tell us about the most beautiful spot on the earth. Have you never been there? Were you never in the larder, where cheeses lie on the shelves, and hams hang from above; where one dances about on tallow candles; that place where one enters lean, and comes out again fat and portly?"

"I know no such place," said the Tree. "But I know the wood, where the sun shines, and where the little birds sing." And then he told all about his youth; and the little Mice had never heard the like before; and they listened and said, —

"Well, to be sure! How much you have seen! How happy you must have been!"

"I!" said the Fir-tree, thinking over what he had himself related. "Yes, in reality those were happy times." And then he told about Christmas Eve, when he was decked out with cakes and candles.

"O," said the little Mice, "how fortunate you have been, old Fir-tree!"

"I am by no means old," said he. "I came from the wood this winter; I am in my prime, and am only rather short for my age."

"What delightful stories you know!" said the Mice: and the next night they came with four other little Mice, who were to hear what the Tree recounted; and the more he related, the more plainly he remembered all himself; and it appeared as if those times had really been happy times. "But they may still come — they may still come. Humpy-Dumpy fell down-stairs, and yet he got a princess!" and he thought at the moment of a nice little Birch-tree growing out in the woods: to the Fir, that would be a real charming princess.

"Who is Klumpy-Dumpy?" asked the Mice. So then the Fir-tree told the whole fairy tale, for he could remember every single word of it; and the little Mice jumped for joy up to the

very top of the Tree. Next night two more Mice came, and on Sunday two Rats, even; but they said the stories were not interesting, which vexed the little Mice; and they, too, now began to think them not so very amusing either.

"Do you know only one story?" asked the Rats.

"Only that one," answered the Tree. "I heard it on my happiest evening; but I did not then know how happy I was."

"It is a very stupid story! Don't you know one about bacon and tallow candles? Can't you tell any larder-stories?"

"No," said the Tree.

"Then good-by," said the Rats; and they went home.

At last the little Mice stayed away also; and the Tree sighed: "After all, it was very pleasant when the sleek little Mice sat round me and listened to what I told them. Now that too is over. But I will take good care to enjoy myself when I am brought out again."

But when was that to be? Why, one morning there came a quantity of people and set to work in the loft. The trunks were moved, the tree was pulled out and thrown — rather hard, it is true — down on the floor, but a man drew him towards the stairs, where the daylight shone.

"Now a merry life will begin again," thought the Tree. He felt the fresh air, the first sunbeam, — and now he was out in the court-yard. All passed so quickly, there was so much going on around him, that the Tree quite forgot to look to himself. The court adjoined a garden, and all was in flower; the roses hung so fresh and odorous over the balustrade, the lindens were in blossom, the Swallows flew by, and said "Quirre-vit! my husband is come!" but it was not the Fir-tree that they meant.

"Now, then, I shall really enjoy life," said he, exultingly, and spread out his branches; but, alas! they were all withered and yellow. It was in a corner that he lay, among weeds and nettles. The golden star of tinsel was still on the top of the Tree, and glittered in the sunshine.

In the court-yard some of the merry children were playing who had danced at Christmas round the Fir-tree, and were so glad at the sight of him. One of the youngest ran and tore off the golden star.

"Only look what is still on the ugly old Christmas tree!" said he, trampling on the branches, so that they all cracked beneath his feet.

And the Tree beheld all the beauty of the flowers, and the freshness in the garden; he beheld himself, and wished he had remained in his dark corner in the loft: he thought of his first youth in the wood, of the merry Christmas Eve, and of the little Mice who had listened with so much pleasure to the story of Humpy-Dumpy.

"'Tis over — 'tis past!" said the poor Tree. "Had I but rejoiced when I had reason to do so! But now 'tis past, 'tis past!"

And the gardener's boy chopped the Tree into small pieces; there was a whole heap lying there. The wood flamed up splendidly under the large brewing copper, and it sighed so deeply! Each sigh was like a shot.

The boys played about in the court, and the youngest wore the gold star on his breast which the Tree had had on the happiest evening of his life. However, that was over now, — the Tree gone, the story at an end. All, all was over; every tale must end at last.

THE MONEY-PIG.

IN the nursery a number of toys lay strewn about; high up, on the wardrobe, stood the money-box, made of clay in the shape of a little pig; the pig had by nature a chink in its back, and this chink had been so enlarged with a knife that whole dollar pieces could slip through; and, indeed, two such had slipped into the box, beside a number of pence. The Money-pig was stuffed so full that it could no longer rattle, and that is the highest point of perfection a money-pig can attain. There it stood upon the cupboard, high and lofty, looking down upon everything else in the room. It knew very well that what it had in its stomach would have bought all the toys, and that's what we call having self-respect.

The others thought of that too, even if they did not say it, for there were many other things to speak of. One of the drawers was half pulled out, and there lay a great handsome Doll, though she was somewhat old, and her neck had been mended. She looked out and said, —

"Now we'll play at men and women, for that is always something!"

And now there was a general uproar, and even the framed prints on the walls turned round and showed that there was a wrong side to them; but that was not because they objected.

It was late at night; the moon shone through the window-frames and afforded the cheapest light. The game was now to begin, and all, even the children's Go-cart, which certainly belonged to the coarser playthings, were invited to take part in the sport.

"Each one has his own peculiar value," said the Go-cart; "we cannot all be noblemen. There must be some who do the work, as the saying is."

The Money-pig was the only one who received a written invitation, for he was of high standing, and they were afraid he would not accept a verbal message. Indeed, he did not answer to say whether he would come nor did he come: if he was to take a part, he must enjoy the sport from his own home; they were to arrange accordingly, and so they did.

The little toy theatre was now put up in such a way that the Money-pig could look directly in. They wanted to begin with a comedy, and afterwards there was to be a tea-party and a discussion for mental improvement, and with this latter part they began immediately. The Rocking-horse spoke of training and race, the Go-cart of railways and steam power, for all this belonged to their profession, and it was quite right they should talk of it. The Clock talked politics — tick—tick — and knew what was the time of day, though it was whispered he did not go correctly ; the Bamboo Cane stood there, stiff and proud, for he was conceited about his brass ferule and his silver top, for being thus bound above and below ; and on the sofa lay two worked cushions, pretty and stupid. And now the play began.

All sat and looked on, and it was requested that the audience should applaud and crack and stamp according as they were gratified. But the Riding-whip said he never cracked for old people, only for young ones who were not yet married.

"I crack for everything," said the Cracker.

"There will be one good place at any rate," thought the Sawdust Box, and that was what each one in the comedy was thinking.

The piece was worthless, but it was well played ; all the characters turned their painted side to the audience, for they were so made that they should only be looked at from that side, and not from the other ; and all played wonderfully well, coming out quite beyond the lamps, because the wires were a little too long, but that only made them come out the more. The darned Doll was quite exhausted with excitement — so thoroughly exhausted that she burst at the darned place in her neck ; and the Money-pig was so enchanted in his way that he formed the resolution to do something for one of the players, and to remember him in his will as the one who should be buried with him in the family vault, when matters were so far advanced.

It was true enjoyment, such true enjoyment that they quite gave up the thoughts of tea, and only carried out the idea of an exercise of wits. That's what they called playing at men

and women; and there was nothing wrong in it, for they were only playing; and each one thought of himself and of what the Money-pig might think; and the Money-pig thought farthest of all, for he thought of making his will and of his burial. And when might this come to pass? Certainly far sooner than was expected. Crack! it fell down from the cupboard — fell on the ground, and was broken to pieces; and the pennies hopped and danced in comical style: the little ones turned round like tops, and the bigger ones rolled away, particularly the one great silver dollar who wanted to go out into the world. And he came out into the world, and so did they all. And the pieces of the Money-pig were put into the dust-bin; but the next day a new money-pig was standing on the cupboard: it had not yet a farthing in its stomach, and therefore it could not rattle, and in this it was like the other. And that was a beginning — and with that we will make an end.

THE SWINEHERD.

THERE was once a poor Prince; he had a kingdom that was very small; still it was quite large enough to marry upon; and he wished to marry.

It was certainly rather cool of him to say to the Emperor's daughter, "Will you have me?" But so he did; for his name was renowned far and wide; and there were a hundred Princesses who would have answered, "Thank you." But see what she said. Now we will hear.

By the grave of the Prince's father there grew a rose-tree,—a most beautiful rose-tree; it blossomed only once in every five years, and even then bore only one flower, but that was a rose that smelt so sweet as to make one forget all cares and sorrows.

And furthermore, the Prince had a nightingale, who could sing in such a manner that it seemed as though all sweet melodies dwelt in her little throat. So the Princess was to have the rose and the nightingale; and they were accordingly put into large silver caskets, and sent to her.

The Emperor had them brought into a large hall, where the

Princess was playing at "making calls," with the ladies of the court; they never did anything else, and when she saw the caskets with the presents, she clapped her hands for joy.

"Ah, if it were but a little pussy-cat!" exclaimed she, then out came the beautiful rose.

"O, how prettily it is made!" said all the court-ladies.

"It is more than pretty," said the Emperor; "it is charming!"

But the Princess touched it, and was almost ready to cry.

"Fie, papa!" said she, "it is not made at all; it is natural!"

"Fie!" cried all the court ladies; "it is natural!"

"Let us see what is in the other casket, before we get into a bad humor," proposed the Emperor. So the Nightingale came forth, and sang so delightfully that at first no one could say anything ill-humored of it.

"*Superbe! charmant!*" exclaimed the ladies; for they all used to chatter French, each one worse than her neighbor.

"How much the bird reminds me of the musical box that belonged to our blessed Empress!" remarked an old Knight. "Ah yes! it is the very same tone, the same execution."

"Yes! yes!" said the Emperor, and he wept like a little child.

"I will still hope that it is not a real bird," said the Princess.

"Yet it is a real bird," said those who had brought it.

"Well, then let the bird fly," returned the Princess; and she positively refused to see the Prince.

However, he was not to be discouraged; he daubed his face over brown and black; pulled his cap over his ears, and knocked at the door.

"Good day, Emperor!" said he. "Can I have employment at the palace?"

"O there are so many that want a place!" said the Emperor; "well, let me see, I want some one to take care of the pigs, for we have a great many of them."

So the Prince was appointed "Imperial Swineherd." He had a dirty little room close by the pig-sty; and there he sat

the whole day, and worked. By the evening, he had made a pretty little saucepan. Little bells were hung all around it; and when the pot was boiling, these bells tinkled in the most charming manner, and played the old melody: —

"Ah! thou dearest Augustine!
All is gone, gone, gone!"

But what was still more curious, whoever held his finger in the smoke of this saucepan, immediately smelt all the dishes that were cooking on every hearth in the city: this, you see, was something quite different from the rose.

Now the Princess happened to walk that way; and when she heard the tune, she stood quite still, and seemed pleased; for she could play "Dearest Augustine;" it was the only piece she knew, and she played it with one finger.

"Why, there is my piece!" said the Princess; "that Swineherd must certainly have been well educated! Here! Go in and ask him the price of the instrument."

And so one of the court-ladies must run in; however, she drew on wooden slippers first.

"What will you take for the saucepan?" inquired the lady.

"I will have ten kisses from the Princess," said the swineherd.

"Mercy on us!" said the lady.

"Yes, I cannot sell it for less," said the swineherd.

"Well, what does he say?" asked the Princess.

"I cannot tell you, really," replied the lady; "it is too bad!"

"Then you can whisper it!" So the lady whispered it.

"He is an impudent fellow!" said the Princess, and she walked on; but when she had gone a little way, the bells tinkled so prettily, —

"Ah! thou dearest Augustine!
All is gone, gone, gone!"

"Stay," said the Princess. "Ask him if he will have ten kisses from the ladies of my court."

"No, thank you!" answered the swineherd: "ten kisses from the Princess, or I keep the saucepan myself."

"That must not be, either!" said the Princess; "but do you all stand before me, that no one may see us."

And the court-ladies placed themselves in front of her, and spread out their dresses; and so the Swineherd got ten kisses, and she got the saucepan.

It was delightful! the saucepan was kept boiling all the evening, and the whole of the following day. They knew perfectly well what was cooking at every fire throughout the city, from the chamberlain's to the cobbler's; the court-ladies danced, and clapped their hands.

"We know who has soup and who has pancakes for dinner to-day, who has cutlets, and who has eggs. How interesting!"

And "How interesting!" said the Lord Steward's wife.

"Yes, but keep my secret, for I am an Emperor's daughter."

"Mercy on us," said they all.

The Swineherd — that is to say the Prince, for no one knew that he was other than an ill-favored swineherd — let not a day pass without working at something; he at last constructed a rattle, which, when it was swung round, played all the waltzes and jig-tunes which have ever been heard since the creation of the world.

"Ah, that is *superbe!*" said the Princess when she passed by; "I have never heard prettier compositions! Go in and ask him the price of the instrument; but I won't kiss him!"

"He will have a hundred kisses from the Princess!" said the court-lady who had been in to ask.

"I think he is crazy!" said the Princess, and walked on; but when she had gone a little way, she stopped again. "One must encourage art," said she; "I am the Emperor's daughter. Tell him, he shall, as on yesterday, have ten kisses from me, and may take the rest from the ladies of the court."

"O! but we should not like that at all!" said the court-ladies.

"What are you muttering?" asked the Princess; "if I can kiss him, surely you can! Remember, I give you your food and wages." So the court-ladies were obliged to go to him again.

"A hundred kisses from the Princess!" said he, "or else let every one keep his own."

"Stand round!" said she; and all the ladies stood round her whilst the kissing was going on.

"What can be the reason for such a crowd close by the pig-sty?" said the Emperor, who happened just then to step out on the balcony. He rubbed his eyes and put on his spectacles. "They are the ladies of the court; there is some play going on. I must go down and see what they are about!" So he pulled up his slippers at the heel, for he had trodden them down.

Heh there! what a hurry he is in.

As soon as he had got into the court-yard, he moved very softly, and the ladies were so much engrossed with counting the kisses, that all might go on fairly, that they did not perceive the Emperor. He rose on his tiptoes.

"What is all this?" said he, when he saw what was going on, and he boxed the Princess's ears with his slipper, just as the Swineherd was taking the eighty-sixth kiss.

"Off with you!" cried the Emperor, for he was very angry; and both Princess and Swineherd were thrust out of the city.

The Princess now stood and wept, the Swineherd scolded, and the rain poured down.

"O how miserable I am!" said the Princess. "If I had but married the handsome young Prince! Ah! how unfortunate I am!"

And the Swineherd went behind a tree, washed the black-and-brown color from his face, threw off his dirty clothes, and stepped forth in his princely robes; he looked so noble that the Princess could not help bowing before him.

"I am come to despise thee," said he. "Thou wouldst not have an honorable prince! thou couldst not prize the rose and the nightingale, but thou wast ready to kiss the Swineherd for the sake of a trumpery plaything. Now thou hast thy deserts!"

He then went back to his own little kingdom, and shut the door of his palace in her face. Now she might well sing,

"Ah! thou dearest Augustine!
All is gone, gone, gone!"

JACK THE DULLARD.

AN OLD STORY TOLD ANEW.

FAR in the interior of the country lay an old baronial hall, and in it lived an old proprietor, who had two sons, which two young men thought themselves too clever by half. They wanted to go out and woo the King's daughter; for she had publicly announced that she would choose for her husband that youth who could arrange his words best.

The two geniuses prepared themselves eight days beforehand — this was the longest time that could be granted them; but it was enough, for they had had much preparatory information, and everybody knows how useful that is. One of them knew the whole Latin dictionary by heart, and the City Advertiser three years; and so well, that he could say it all either backwards or forwards. The other was deeply read in the corporation laws, and knew by heart what every corporation ought to know; and, accordingly, he thought he could talk of affairs of state, and put his spoke in the wheel in the council. And he knew one thing more; he could embroider braces with roses and other flowers, and with arabesques, for he was a tasty, light-fingered fellow.

"I shall win the Princess!" So cried both of them. Their old papa gave to each a handsome horse. The youth who knew the dictionary and newspaper by heart had a black horse, and he who knew all about the corporation laws received a milk-white steed. Then they rubbed the corners of their mouths with fish-oil, so that they might become very smooth and glib. All the servants stood below in the court-yard, and looked on while they mounted their horses; and just by chance the third son came up; for there were three sons, but nobody counted the third with his brothers, because he was not so learned as they, and indeed he was generally known as "Jack the Dullard."

"Hallo!" said Jack the Dullard, "where are you going there in your Sunday clothes?"

"We're going to the King's court, as suitors to the King's

daughter. Don't you know the announcement that has been made all through the country?" And they told him all about it.

"My word! I'll be in it too!" said Jack the Dullard; and his two brothers burst out laughing at him, and rode away.

"Father," said Jack, "I must have a horse too. I do feel so desperately inclined to marry! If she accepts me, she accepts me; and if she won't have me, I'll have her; but she *shall* be mine!"

"Don't talk nonsense," replied the father. "You shall have no horse from me. You don't know how to speak — you can't arrange your words. Your brothers, now, they are statesmen."

"Well," quoth Jack the Dullard, "if I can't have a horse, I'll take the billy-goat, who belongs to me, and he can carry me very well!"

And so said, so done. He mounted the billy-goat, pressed his heels into its sides, and galloped down the high street like a hurricane.

"Hei, houp! that was a ride! Here I come!" shouted Jack the Dullard, and he sang till his voice echoed far and wide.

But his brothers rode slowly on in advance of him. They spoke not a word, for they were thinking about the fine extempore speeches they would have to bring out, and these had to be cleverly prepared and learned beforehand.

"Hallo!" shouted Jack the Dullard. "Here am I! Look what I have found on the high road."

And he showed them what it was, and it was a dead crow.

"Dullard!" exclaimed the brothers, "what are you going to do with that?"

"With the crow? why, I am going to give it to the Princess."

"Yes, do so," said they; and they laughed, and rode on.

"Hallo, here I am again! Just see what I have found now; you don't find that on the high road every day!"

And the brothers turned round to see what he could have found now.

"Dullard!" they cried, "that is only an old wooden shoe, and the upper part is missing into the bargain; are you going to give that also to the Princess?"

"Most certainly I shall," replied Jack the Dullard; and again the brothers laughed and rode on, and thus they got far in advance of him; but, —

"Hallo — hop rara!" and there was Jack the Dullard again. "It is getting better and better," he cried. "Hurrah! it is quite famous."

"Why, what have you found this time?" inquired the brothers.

"O," said Jack the Dullard, "I can hardly tell you. How glad the Princess will be!"

"Bah!" said the brothers; "that is nothing but clay out of the ditch."

"Yes, certainly it is," said Jack the Dullard; "and clay of the finest sort. See, it is so wet, it runs through one's fingers." And he filled his pocket with the clay.

But his brothers galloped on till the sparks flew, and consequently they arrived a full hour earlier at the town gate than could Jack. Now at the gate each suitor was provided with a number, and all were placed in rows immediately on their arrival, six in each row, and so closely packed together that they could not move their arms; and that was a prudent arrangement, for they would certainly have come to blows, had they been able, merely because one of them stood before the other.

All the inhabitants of the country round about stood in great crowds around the castle, almost under the very windows, to see the Princess receive the suitors; and as each stepped into the hall, his power of speech went right out.

"Good for nothing!" said the King's daughter; "out with him!"

Now they came for that brother who knew the dictionary by heart; but he did not know it now; he had absolutely forgotten it altogether; and the boards seemed to reëcho with his footsteps, and the ceiling of the hall was made of looking-glass, so that he saw himself standing on his head; and at the window stood three clerks and a head clerk, and

every one of them was writing down every single word that was uttered, so that it might be printed in the newspapers, and sold for a penny at the street corners. It was a terrible ordeal, and they had, moreover, made such a fire in the stove, that the room seemed quite red-hot.

"It is dreadfully hot here!" observed the first Brother.

"Yes," replied the Princess, "my father is going to roast young pullets to-day."

"Baa!" there he stood like a baa-lamb. He had not been prepared for a speech of this kind, and had not a word to say, though he intended to say something witty. "Baa!"

"Good for nothing!" said the Princess. "Off with him!" And he was obliged to go accordingly.

And now the second Brother came in.

"It is terribly warm here!" he observed.

"Yes, we're roasting pullets to-day," replied the Princess.

"What — what were you — were you pleased to ob — ob" — stammered he — and all the clerks wrote down, "pleased to ob" —

"Good for nothing!" said the Princess. "Away with him!"

Now came the turn of Jack the Dullard. He rode into the hall on his goat.

"Well, it's most abominably hot here."

"Yes, because I'm roasting young pullets," replied the Princess.

"Ah, that's lucky!" exclaimed Jack the Dullard, "for I suppose you'll let me roast my crow at the same time?"

"With the greatest pleasure," said the Princess. "But have you anything you can roast it in? for I have neither pot nor pan."

"Certainly I have!" said Jack. "Here's a cooking utensil with a tin handle."

And he brought out the old wooden shoe, and put the crow into it.

"Well, that *is* a famous dish!" said the Princess. "But what shall we do for sauce?"

"O, I have that in my pocket," said Jack: "I have so much of it that I can afford to throw some away;" and he poured some of the clay out of his pocket.

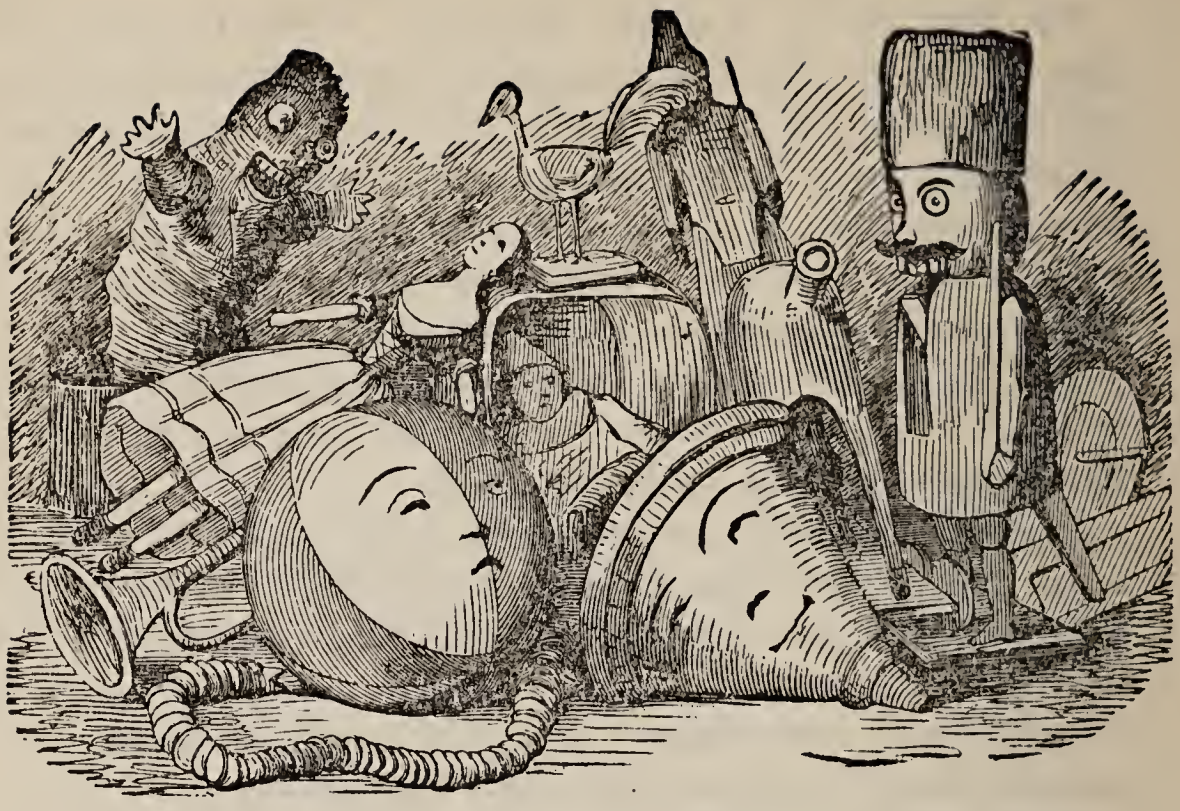
"I like that!" said the Princess. "You can give an answer, and you have something to say for yourself, and so you shall be my husband. But are you aware that every word we speak is being taken down, and will be published in the paper to-morrow? Look yonder, and you will see in every window three clerks and a head clerk; and the old head clerk is the worst of all, for he can't understand anything."

But she only said this to frighten Jack the Dullard: and the clerks gave a great crow of delight, and each one spurted a blot out of his pen on to the floor.

"O, those are the gentlemen, are they?" said Jack; "then I will give the best I have to the head clerk." And he turned out his pockets, and flung the wet clay full in the head clerk's face.

"That was very cleverly done," cried the Princess. "I couldn't have done that; but I shall learn in time."

And so Jack the Dullard was made a king, and received a crown and a wife, and sat upon a throne. And we read this in the official report of the head clerk, but that is not altogether to be trusted.



THE LOVERS.

A TOP and a little Ball were together in a drawer among some other toys; and the Top said to the Ball, —

"Shall we not be lovers, as we live together in the same box?"

But the Ball, which had a coat of morocco leather, and was just as conceited as any fine lady, would make no answer to such a proposal. The next day came the little boy to whom the toys belonged: he painted the Top red and yellow, and hammered a brass nail into it; and it looked splendid when the Top turned round.

"Look at me!" he cried to the little Ball. "What do you say now? Shall we not be engaged to each other? We suit one another so well! You jump and I dance! No one could be happier than we two should be."

"Indeed! Do you think so?" replied the little Ball. "Perhaps you do not know that my papa and my mamma were morocco slippers, and that I have a Spanish cork inside me?"

"Yes, but I am made of mahogany," said the Top; "and the mayor himself turned me. He has a turning lathe of his own, and it amuses him greatly."

"Can I depend on that?" asked the little Ball.

"May I never be whipped again if it is not true!" replied the Top.

"You can speak well for yourself," observed the Ball, "but I cannot grant your request. I am as good as engaged to a swallow: every time I leap up into the air he puts her head out of the nest and says, 'Will you?' And now I have silently said 'Yes,' and that is as good as half engaged; but I promise I will never forget you."

"Yes, that will be much good!" said the Top.

And they spoke no more to each other.

Next day the Ball was taken out by the boy. The Top saw how she flew high into the air, like a bird; at last one could no longer see her. Each time she came back again, but gave a high leap when she touched the earth, and that was done either from her longing to mount up again, or because she had a Spanish cork in her body. But the ninth time the little Ball remained absent, and did not come back again; and the boy sought and sought, but she was gone.

"I know very well where she is!" sighed the Top. "She is in the Swallow's nest, and has married the Swallow!"

The more the Top thought of this, the more it longed for the Ball. Just because it could not get the Ball, its love increased; and the fact that the Ball had chosen another formed a peculiar feature in the case. So the Top danced round and hummed, but always thought of the little Ball, which became more and more beautiful in his fancy. Thus several years went by, and now it was an old love.

And the Top was no longer young! But one day he was gilt all over; never had he looked so handsome; he was now a golden Top, and sprang till he hummed again. Yes, that was something worth seeing! But all at once he sprang too high, and — he was gone!

They looked and looked, even in the cellar, but he was not to be found. Where could he be?

He had jumped into the dust-box, where all kinds of things were lying: cabbage stalks, sweepings, and dust that had fallen down from the roof.

"Here's a nice place to lie in! The gilding will soon leave me here. Among what a rabble have I alighted!"

And then he looked sideways at a long leafless cabbage stump, and at a curious round thing like an old apple; but it was not an apple — it was an old Ball, which had lain for years in the roof-gutter and was quite saturated with water.

"Thank goodness, here comes one of us, with whom one can talk!" said the little Ball, and looked at the gilt Top. "I am really morocco, worked by maidens' hands, and have a Spanish cork within me; but no one would think it, to look at me. I was very near marrying a swallow, but I fell into the gutter on the roof, and have lain there full five years, and become quite wet through. You may believe me, that's a long time for a young girl."

But the Top said nothing. He thought of his old love; and the more he heard, the clearer it became to him that this was she. Then came the servant-girl, and wanted to turn out the dust-box. "Aha! there's a gilt top!" she cried. And so the Top was brought again to notice and honor, but nothing was heard of the little Ball. And the Top spoke no more of his old love; for that dies away when the beloved object has lain for five years in a roof-gutter and got wet through; yes, one does not know her again when one meets her in the dust-box.

THE SWIFTEST RUNNERS.

THERE was a prize offered — or rather two prizes, a large and a small one — for the greatest speed, not in a single race, but to such as had raced the whole year.

"I took the first prize," said the Hare. "One had a right to expect justice when one's own family and best friends were in the council; but that the Snail should have got the second prize I consider as almost an insult to me."

"No," observed the Fence-rail, who had been a witness to the distribution of the prizes; "you must take diligence and good-will into consideration. That remark was made by several very estimable persons, and that was also my opinion. The Snail, to be sure, took half a year to cross the threshold; but he broke his thigh-bone in the haste he made. He devoted himself entirely to this race; and, moreover, he ran with his house on his back. All these weighed in his favor, and so he took the second prize."

"I think my claims might also have been taken into consideration," said the Swallow. "More speedy than I, in flight and motion, I believe no one has shown himself. And where have I not been? Far, far away!"

"And that is just your misfortune," said the Fence-rail. "You gad about too much. You are always on the wing, ready to start out of the country when it begins to freeze. You have no love for your father-land. You cannot claim any consideration in it."

"But if I were to sleep all the winter through on the moor," inquired the Swallow — "sleep my whole time away — should I be thus entitled to be taken into consideration?"

"Obtain an affidavit from the old woman of the moor that you did sleep half a year in your father-land, then your claim will be taken into consideration."

"I deserved the first prize instead of the second," said the Snail. "I know very well that the Hare only ran from cowardice, whenever he thought there was danger near. I, on the contrary, made the trial the business of my life, and I have become a cripple in consequence of my exertions. If

any one had a right to the first prize it was I; but I make no fuss; I scorn to do so." And then he spat.

"I can declare upon my honor that each prize, at least as far as my voice in the matter went, was accorded with strict justice," said the old Sign-post in the wood, who had been one of the arbitrators. "I always act from order, reflection, and calculation. Seven times before have I had the honor to be engaged in the distribution of the prizes, but never until to-day have I had my own way carried out. My plan has always hitherto been thwarted — that was, to give the first prize to one of the first letters in the alphabet, and the second prize to one of the last letters. If you will be so good as to grant me your attention, I will explain it to you. The eighth letter in the alphabet from *A* is *H* — that stands for *Hare*, and therefore I awarded the greatest prize to the Hare; and the eighth letter from the end is *S*, therefore the *Snail* obtained the second prize. Next time the *I* will carry off the first prize, and *R* the second. A due attention to order and rotation should prevail in all rewards and appointments. Everything should go according to rule. *Rule* must precede merit."

"I should certainly have voted for myself, had I not been among the judges," said the Mule. "People must take into account not only how quickly one goes, but what other circumstances are in question; as, for instance, how much one carries. But I would not this time have thought about that, neither about the Hare's wisdom in his flight — his tact in springing suddenly to one side, to put his pursuers on the wrong scent, away from his place of concealment. No; there is one thing many people think much of, and which ought never to be disregarded. It is called THE BEAUTIFUL. I saw that in the Hare's charming, well-grown ears; it is quite a pleasure to see how long they are. I fancied that I beheld myself when I was little, and so I voted for him."

"Hush!" said the Fly. "As for me I will not speak; I will only say one word. I know right well that I have outrun more than one hare. The other day I broke the hind legs of one of the young ones. I was sitting on the locomotive before the train: I often do that. One sees so well there

one's own speed. A young hare ran for a long time in front of the engine; he had no idea that I was there. At length he was just going to turn off the line, when the locomotive went over his hind legs and broke them, for I was sitting on it. The hare remained lying there, but I drove on. This was surely getting before him; but I do not care for the prize."

"It appears to me," thought the Wild Rose, but she did not say it — it is not her nature to express her ideas openly, though it might have been well had she done so — "it appears to me that the Sunbeam should have had the first prize of honor, and the second also. It passes in a moment the immeasurable space from the sun down to us, and comes with such power that all nature is awakened by it. It has such beauty, that all we roses redden and become fragrant under it. The high presiding authorities do not seem to have noticed *it* at all. Were I the Sunbeam, I would give each of them a sun-stroke — that I would; but it would only make them crazy, and they will very likely be that without it. I shall say nothing," thought the Wild Rose. "There is peace in the wood; it is delightful to blossom, to shed refreshing perfume around, to live amidst the songs of birds and the rustling of trees; but the sun's rays will outlive us all."

"What is the first prize?" asked the Earth-worm, who had overslept himself, and only now joined them.

"It is free entrance to the kitchen garden," said the Mule. "I proposed the prize. The Hare ought to have it; and so I thought, as a clear-sighted and judicious member of the meeting, that this was a sensible view of the matter. I was resolved he should have it, and he is now provided for. The Snail has permission to sit on the stone fence, and to enjoy the moss and the sunshine; and, moreover, he is appointed to be one of the chief judges of the next race. It is well to have one who is practically acquainted with the business in hand — on a committee, as human beings call it. I must say I expect great things from the future — we have made so good a beginning."

THE TRAVELLING COMPANION.

POOR John was very sad ; for his father was very ill, and just dying. There was no one but the two in the little room, and the lamp had nearly burnt out ; for it was late in the night.

"You have been a good son, John," said the sick father, "and God will help you on in the world." He looked at him, as he spoke, with mild, earnest eyes, drew a deep sigh, and died ; yet it appeared as if he still slept

John wept bitterly. He had no one in the wide world now ; neither father, mother, brother, nor sister. Poor John! he knelt down by the bed, kissed his dead father's hand, and wept many, many bitter tears ; but at last his eyes closed, and he fell asleep with his head resting against the hard bed-post.

Then he dreamed a strange dream : he thought he saw the sun shining upon him, and his father alive and well, and even heard him laughing as he used to do when he was very happy. A beautiful girl, with a golden crown on her head, and long, shining hair, gave him her hand ; and his father said, "See what a bride you have won. She is the loveliest maiden on the whole earth." Then he awoke, and all the beautiful things vanished before his eyes, his father lay dead on the bed, and he was all alone. Poor John!

The week after, the dead man was buried. John walked behind the coffin which contained his father, whom he so dearly loved, and would never again see. He heard the earth fall on the coffin-lid, and watched it till only a corner remained in sight, and at last that also disappeared. He felt as if his heart would break with its weight of sorrow, till those who stood round the grave sang a psalm, and the sweet, holy tones brought tears into his eyes, which relieved him. The sun shone brightly down on the green trees, as if it would say, "You must not be so sorrowful, John. Do you see the beautiful blue sky above you? Your father is up there, and he prays to the loving Father of all, that you may do well in the future."

"I will always be good," said John, "and then I shall go to be with my father in heaven. What joy it will be when we see each other again! How much I shall have to relate to him, and how many things he will be able to explain to me of the delights of heaven, and teach me as he once did on earth. O, what joy it will be!"

John pictured it all so plainly to himself, that he smiled even while the tears ran down his cheeks.

The little birds in the chestnut-trees twittered, "Tweet, tweet;" they were so happy, although they had seen the funeral; but they seemed as if they knew that the dead man was now in heaven, and that he had wings much larger and more beautiful than their own; that he was happy now, because he had been good here on earth, and they were glad of it. John saw them fly away out of the green trees into the wide world, and he longed to fly with them; but first he cut out a large wooden cross, to place on his father's grave; and when he brought it there in the evening, he found the grave decked out with gravel and flowers. Strangers had done this, — they who had known the good old father who was now dead, and who had loved him very much.

Early the next morning, John packed up his little bundle of clothes, and placed all his money, which consisted of fifty dollars and a few shillings, in his girdle; with this he determined to try his fortune in the world. But first he went into the church-yard; and, by his father's grave, he said "Our

Father;" and then added: "Farewell, dear father; I will always be a true and good man, and do thou ask the good God to make me good."

And as he passed through the fields, all the flowers looked fresh and beautiful in the warm sunshine, and nodded in the wind, as if they wished to say, "Welcome to the green wood; here all is fresh and bright."

Then John turned to have one more look at the old church, in which he had been christened in his infancy, and where his father had taken him every Sunday to hear the service and join in singing the psalms. As he looked at the old tower, he espied the ringer standing at one of the narrow openings, with his little pointed red cap on his head, and shading his eyes from the sun with his bent arm. John nodded farewell to him; and the little ringer waved his red cap, laid his hand on his heart, and kissed his hand to him a great many times, to show that he felt kindly towards him, and wished him a prosperous journey.

John continued his journey, and thought of all the wonderful things he should see in the large, beautiful world, till he found himself farther away from home than ever he had been before. He did not even know the names of the places he passed through, and could scarcely understand the language of the people he met, for he was far away in a strange land. The first night he slept on a hay-stack, out in the fields, for there was no other bed for him; but it seemed to him so nice and comfortable that even a king need not wish for a better. The field, the brook, the hay-stack, with the blue sky above, formed a beautiful sleeping-room. The green grass, with the little red and white flowers, was the carpet; the elder-bushes and the hedges of wild roses looked like garlands on the walls; and for a bath he could have the clear, fresh water of the brook; while the rushes bowed their heads to him, to wish him good morning and good evening. The moon, like a large lamp, hung high up in the blue ceiling, and he had no fear of its setting fire to his curtains. John slept here quite safely all night; and when he awoke, the sun was up, and all the little birds were singing round him, "Good morning! good morning! Are you not up yet?"

It was Sunday, and the bells were ringing for church. As the people went in, John followed them; he heard God's word, joined in singing the psalms, and listened to the preacher. It seemed to him just as if he were in his own church, where he had been christened, and had sung the psalms with his father. Out in the church-yard were several graves, and on some of them the grass had grown very high. John thought of his father's grave, which he knew at last would look like these, as he was not there to weed and attend to it. Then he set to work, pulled up the high grass, raised the wooden crosses which had fallen down, and replaced the wreaths which had been blown away from their places by the wind, thinking all the time, "Perhaps some one is doing the same for my father's grave, as I am not there to do it."

Outside the church-yard door stood an old beggar, leaning on his crutch. John gave him his silver shillings, and then he continued his journey, feeling lighter and happier than ever. Towards evening, the weather became very stormy, and he hastened on as quickly as he could, to get shelter: but it was quite dark by the time he reached a little lonely church which stood on a hill. "I will go in here," he said, "and sit down in a corner; for I am quite tired, and want rest."

So he went in, and seated himself; then he folded his hands, and offered up his evening prayer, and was soon fast asleep and dreaming, while the thunder rolled and the lightning flashed without. When he awoke, it was still night; but the storm had ceased, and the moon shone in upon him through the windows. Then he saw an open coffin standing in the centre of the church, which contained a dead man, waiting for burial. John was not at all timid; he had a good conscience, and he knew also that the dead can never injure any one. It is living, wicked men who do harm to others. Two such wicked persons stood now by the dead man, who had been brought to the church to be buried. Their evil intentions were to throw the poor dead body outside the church door, and not leave him to rest in his coffin.

"Why do you do this?" asked John, when he saw what they were going to do; "it is very wicked. Leave him to rest in peace, in Christ's name."

"Bosh!" replied the two dreadful men. "He has cheated us; he owed us money which he could not pay, and now he is dead we shall not get a penny; so we mean to have our revenge, and let him lie like a dog outside the church door."

"I have only fifty dollars," said John; "it is all I own in the world, but I will give it to you if you will promise me faithfully to leave the dead man in peace. I shall be able to get on without the money; I have strong and healthy limbs, and God will always help me."

"Why, of course," said the horrid men, "if you will pay his debt we will both promise not to touch him. You may depend upon that;" and then they took the money he offered them, laughed at him for his good nature, and went their way.

Then he laid the dead body back in the coffin, folded the hands, and took leave of it; and went away contentedly through the great forest. All around him he could see the prettiest little elves dancing in the moonlight, which shone through the trees. They were not disturbed by his appearance, for they knew he was good and harmless among men. They are wicked people only who can never obtain a glimpse of fairies. Some of them were not taller than the breadth of a finger, and they wore golden combs in their long yellow hair. They were rocking themselves two together on the large dew-drops with which the leaves and the high grass were sprinkled. Sometimes the dew-drops would roll away, and then they fell down between the stems of the long grass, and caused a great deal of laughing and noise among the other little people. It was quite charming to watch them at play. Then they sang songs, and John remembered that he had learnt those pretty songs when he was a little boy. Large speckled spiders, with silver crowns on their heads, were employed to spin suspension bridges and palaces from one hedge to another, and when the tiny drops fell upon them, they glittered in the moonlight like shining glass. This continued till sunrise. Then the little elves crept into the flower buds, and the wind seized the bridges and palaces, and fluttered them in the air like cob-webs.

As John left the wood, a strong man's voice called after him, "Hallo, comrade, where are you travelling?"

"Into the wide world," he replied; "I am only a poor lad; I have neither father nor mother, but God will help me."

"I am going into the wide world also," replied the Stranger; "shall we keep each other company?"

"With all my heart," said he; and so they went on together. Soon they began to like each other very much, for they were both good; but John found out that the Stranger was much more clever than himself. He had travelled all over the world, and could describe almost everything. The sun was high in the heavens when they seated themselves under a large tree to eat their breakfast, and at the same moment an old woman came toward them.

She was very old and almost bent double. She leaned upon a stick and carried on her back a bundle of fire-wood, which she had collected in the forest; her apron was tied round it, and John saw three great stems of fern and some willow twigs peeping out. Just as she came close up to them, her foot slipped and she fell to the ground screaming loudly: poor old woman, she had broken her leg! John proposed directly that they should carry the old woman home to her cottage; but the Stranger opened his knapsack and took out a box, in which he said he had a salve that would quickly make her leg well and strong again, so that she would be able to walk home herself, as if her leg had never been broken. And all that he would ask in return was the three fern stems which she carried in her apron.

"That is rather too high a price," said the old woman nodding her head quite strangely. She did not seem at all inclined to part with the fern stems. However, it was not very agreeable to lie there with a broken leg, so she gave them to him; and such was the power of the ointment, that no sooner had he rubbed her leg with it than the old mother rose up and walked even better than she had done before. But then this wonderful ointment could not be bought at an apothecary's.

"What can you want with those three fern rods?" asked John of his fellow-traveller.

"O they will make capital brooms," said he; "and I like them because I am a whimsical fellow." Then they walked on together for a long distance.

"How dark the sky is becoming," said John; "and look at those thick, heavy clouds."

"Those are not clouds," replied his fellow-traveller; "they are mountains — large lofty mountains — on the tops of which we should be above the clouds, in the pure, free air. Believe me, it is delightful to ascend so high; to-morrow we shall be there." But the mountains were not so near as they appeared; they had to travel a whole day before they reached them, and pass through black forests and piles of rock as large as a town. The journey had been so fatiguing that John and his fellow-traveller stopped to rest at a road-side inn, so that they might gain strength for their journey on the morrow. In the large public room of the inn a great many persons were assembled to see a comedy performed by dolls. The Showman had just erected his little theatre, and the people were sitting round the room to witness the performance. Right in front, in the very best place, sat a stout butcher, with a great bull-dog by his side who seemed very much inclined to bite. He sat staring with all his eyes, and so indeed did every one else in the room. And then the play began. It was a pretty piece, with a king and queen in it, who sat on a beautiful throne, and had gold crowns on their heads. The trains to their dresses were very long, according to the fashion; while the prettiest of wooden dolls, with glass eyes and large moustaches, stood at the doors, and opened and shut them, that the fresh air might come into the room. It was a very pleasant play, not at all mournful; but just as the Queen stood up and walked across the stage, the great bull-dog, who should have been held back by his master, made a spring forward, and caught the Queen in his teeth by the slender waist, so that it snapped in two. This was a very dreadful disaster. The poor man, who was exhibiting the dolls, was much annoyed, and quite sad about his Queen; she was the prettiest doll he had, and the bull-dog had broken her head and shoulders off. But after all the people were gone away, the Stranger, who came with John, said that he could soon set her to rights. And then he brought out his box and rubbed the doll with some of the salve with which he had cured the old woman when she broke her leg. As soon as this was done the doll's back

became quite right again; her head and shoulders were fixed on, and she could even move her limbs herself: there was now no occasion to pull the wires, for the doll acted just like a living creature, excepting that she could not speak. The man to whom the show belonged was quite delighted at having a doll who could dance of herself without being pulled by the wires; none of the other dolls could do this.

During the night, when all the people at the inn were gone to bed, some one was heard to sigh so deeply and painfully, and the sighing continued for so long a time, that every one got up to see what could be the matter. The Showman went at once to his little theatre and found that it proceeded from the dolls, who all lay on the floor sighing piteously, and staring with their glass eyes; they all wanted to be rubbed with the ointment, so that, like the Queen, they might be able to move of themselves. The Queen threw herself on her knees, took off her beautiful crown, and, holding it in her hand, cried, "Take this from me, but do rub my husband and his courtiers."

The poor man who owned the theatre could scarcely refrain from weeping; he was so sorry that he could not help them. Then he immediately spoke to John's comrade, and promised him all the money he might receive at the next evening's performance, if he would only rub the ointment on four or five of his dolls. But the fellow-traveller said he did not require anything in return, excepting the sword which the Showman wore by his side. As soon as he received the sword he anointed six of the dolls with the ointment, and they were able immediately to dance so gracefully that all the living girls in the room could not help joining in the dance. The coachman danced with the cook, and the waiters with the chambermaids, and all the strangers joined; even the tongs and the fire-shovel made an attempt, but they fell down after the first jump. So, after all, it was a very merry night. The next morning John and his companion left the inn to continue their journey through the great pine-forests and over the high mountains. They arrived at last at such a great height that towns and villages lay beneath them, and the church steeples looked like little specks between the green trees. They

could see for miles around, far away to places they had never visited, and John saw more of the beautiful world than he had ever known before. The sun shone brightly in the blue firmament above, and through the clear mountain air came the sound of the huntsman's horn, and the soft, sweet notes brought tears into his eyes, and he could not help exclaiming, "How good and loving God is to give us all this beauty and loveliness in the world to make us happy!"

His fellow-traveller stood by with folded hands, gazing on the dark woods and the towns bathed in the warm sunshine. At this moment there sounded over their heads sweet music. They looked up, and discovered a large white swan hovering in the air, and singing as never bird sang before. But the song soon became weaker and weaker, the bird's head drooped, and he sunk slowly down, and lay dead at their feet.

"It is a beautiful bird," said the Traveller, "and these large white wings are worth a great deal of money. I will take them with me. You see now that a sword will be very useful."

So he cut off the wings of the dead swan with one blow, and carried them away with him.

They now continued their journey over the mountains for many miles, till they at length reached a large city, containing hundreds of towers, that shone in the sunshine like silver. In the midst of the city stood a splendid marble palace, roofed with pure red gold, in which dwelt the King. John and his companion would not go into the town immediately; so they stopped at an inn outside the town, to change their clothes; for they wished to appear respectable as they walked through the streets. The Landlord told them that the King was a very good man, who never injured any one; but as to his daughter, "Heaven defend us!"

She was indeed a wicked Princess. She possessed beauty enough — nobody could be more elegant or prettier than she was; but what of that? for she was a wicked witch; and in consequence of her conduct many noble young princes had lost their lives. Any one was at liberty to make her an offer; were he a prince or a beggar, it mattered not to her. She would ask him to guess three things which she had just

thought of, and if he succeeded, he was to marry her, and be king over all the land when her father died; but if he could not guess these three things, then she ordered him to be hanged or to have his head cut off. The old King, her father, was very much grieved at her conduct, but he could not prevent her from being so wicked, because he once said he would have nothing more to do with her lovers; she might do as she pleased. Each prince who came and tried the three guesses, so that he might marry the Princess, had been unable to find them out, and had been hanged or beheaded. They had all been warned in time, and might have left her alone, if they would. The old King became at last so distressed at all these dreadful circumstances, that for a whole day every year he and his soldiers knelt and prayed that the Princess might become good; but she continued as wicked as ever. The old women who drank brandy would color it quite black before they drank it, to show how they mourned; and what more could they do?

"What a horrible princess!" said John; "she ought to be well flogged. If I were the old King, I would have her punished in some way."

Just then they heard the people outside shouting, "Hurrah!" and, looking out, they saw the Princess passing by; and she was really so beautiful that everybody forgot her wickedness, and shouted, "Hurrah!" Twelve lovely maidens in white silk dresses, holding golden tulips in their hands, rode by her side on coal-black horses. The Princess herself had a snow-white steed, decked with diamonds and rubies. Her dress was of cloth of gold, and the whip she held in her hand looked like a sunbeam. The golden crown on her head glittered like the stars of heaven, and her mantle was formed of thousands of butterflies' wings sewn together. Yet she herself was more beautiful than all.

When John saw her, his face became as red as a drop of blood, and he could scarcely utter a word. The Princess looked exactly like the beautiful lady with the golden crown, of whom he had dreamed on the night his father died. She appeared to him so lovely that he could not help loving her.

"It could not be true," he thought, "that she was really a

wicked witch, who ordered people to be hanged or beheaded, if they could not guess her thoughts. Every one has permission to go and ask her hand, even the poorest beggar. I shall pay a visit to the palace," he said; "I must go, for I cannot help myself."

Then they all advised him not to attempt it; for he would be sure to share the same fate as the rest. His fellow-traveller also tried to persuade him against it; but John seemed quite sure of success. He brushed his shoes and his coat, washed his face and his hands, combed his soft flaxen hair, and then went out alone into the town, and walked to the palace.

"Come in," said the King, as John knocked at the door. John opened it, and the old King, in a dressing-gown and embroidered slippers, came toward him. He had the crown on his head, carried his sceptre in one hand, and the orb in the other. "Wait a bit," said he, and he placed the orb under his arm, so that he could offer the other hand to John; but when he found that John was another suitor, he began to weep so violently that both the sceptre and the orb fell to the floor, and he was obliged to wipe his eyes with his dressing-gown. Poor old King! "Let her alone," he said; "you will fare as badly as all the others. Come, I will show you." Then he led him out into the Princess's pleasure gardens, and there he saw a frightful sight. On every tree hung three or four king's sons who had wooed the Princess, but had not been able to guess the riddles she gave them. Their skeletons rattled in every breeze, so that the terrified birds never dared to venture into the garden. All the flowers were supported by human bones instead of sticks, and human skulls in the flower-pots grinned horribly. It was really a doleful garden for a princess. "Do you see all this?" said the old King; "your fate will be the same as those who are here, therefore do not attempt it. You really make me very unhappy, — I take these things to heart so very much."

John kissed the good old King's hand, and said he was sure it would be all right, for he was quite enchanted with the beautiful Princess. Then the Princess herself came riding into the palace yard with all her ladies, and he wished her "Good morning." She looked wonderfully fair and lovely

when she offered her hand to John, and he loved her more than ever. How could she be a wicked witch, as all the people asserted? He accompanied her into the hall, and the little pages offered them gingerbread nuts and sweetmeats; but the old King was so unhappy he could eat nothing, and besides, gingerbread nuts were too hard for him. It was decided that John should come to the palace the next day, when the judges and the whole of the counselors would be present, to try if he could guess the first riddle. If he succeeded, he would have to come a second time; but if not, he would lose his life, — and no one had ever been able to guess even one. However, John was not at all anxious about the result of his trial; on the contrary, he was very merry. He thought only of the beautiful Princess, and believed that in some way he should have help, but how he knew not, and did not like to think about it; so he danced along the high-road as he went back to the inn, where he had left his fellow-traveller waiting for him. John could not refrain from telling him how gracious the Princess had been, and how beautiful she looked. He longed for the next day so much, that he might go to the palace and try his luck at guessing the riddles. But his comrade shook his head, and looked very mournful. "I do so wish you to do well," said he; "we might have continued together much longer, and now I am likely to lose you; you poor dear John! I could shed tears, but I will not make you unhappy on the last night we may be together. We will be merry, really merry this evening; to-morrow, after you are gone, I shall be able to weep undisturbed."

It was very quickly known among the inhabitants of the town that another suitor had arrived for the Princess, and there was great sorrow in consequence. The theatre remained closed, the women who sold sweetmeats tied crape round the sugar-sticks, and the King and the priests were on their knees in the church. There was a great lamentation, for no one expected John to succeed better than those who had been suitors before.

In the evening John's comrade prepared a large bowl of punch, and said, "Now let us be merry, and drink to the health of the Princess." But after drinking two glasses, John

became so sleepy, that he could not possibly keep his eyes open, and fell fast asleep. Then his fellow-traveller lifted him gently out of his chair, and laid him on the bed ; and as soon as it was quite dark, he took the two large wings which he had cut from the dead swan, and tied them firmly to his own shoulders. Then he put into his pocket the largest of the three rods which he had obtained from the old woman who had fallen and broken her leg. After this he opened the window, and flew away over the town, straight towards the palace, and seated himself in a corner, under the window which looked into the bedroom of the Princess.

The town was perfectly still when the clocks struck a quarter to twelve. Presently the window opened, and the Princess, who had large black wings to her shoulders, and a long white mantle, flew away over the city towards a high mountain. The Fellow-traveller, who had made himself invisible, so that she could not possibly see him, flew after her through the air, and whipped the Princess with his rod, so that the blood came whenever he struck her. Ah, it was a strange flight through the air ! The wind caught her mantle, so that it spread out on all sides, like the large sail of a ship, and the moon shone through it. "How it hails, to be sure!" said the Princess, at each blow she received from the rod ; and it served her right to be whipped.

At last she reached the side of the mountain, and knocked. The mountain opened with a noise like the roll of thunder, and the Princess went in. The Traveller followed her ; no one could see him, as he had made himself invisible. They went through a long, wide passage. A thousand gleaming spiders ran here and there on the walls, causing them to glitter as if they were illuminated with fire. They next entered a large hall built of silver and gold. Large red and blue flowers shone on the walls, looking like sunflowers in size ; but no one could dare to pluck them, for the stems were hideous poisonous snakes, and the flowers were flames of fire, darting out of their jaws. Shining glow-worms covered the ceiling, and sky-blue bats flapped their transparent wings. Altogether the place had a frightful appearance. In the middle of the floor stood a throne supported by four skeleton horses, whose

harness had been made by fiery-red spiders. The throne itself was made of milk-white glass, and the cushions were little black mice, each biting the other's tail. Over it hung a canopy of rose-colored spiders' webs, spotted with the prettiest little green flies, which sparkled like precious stones. On the throne sat an old Magician with a crown on his ugly head, and a sceptre in his hand. He kissed the Princess on the forehead, seated her by his side on the splendid throne, and then the music commenced. Great black grasshoppers played the mouth organ, and the owl struck herself on the body instead of a drum. It was altogether a ridiculous concert. Little black goblins with false lights in their caps danced about the hall; but no one could see the Traveller, and he had placed himself just behind the throne where he could see and hear everything. The courtiers who came in afterwards looked noble and grand; but any one with common sense could see what they really were, only broomsticks, with cabbages for heads. The Magician had given them life, and dressed them in embroidered robes. It answered very well, as they were only wanted for show. After there had been a little dancing, the Princess told the Magician that she had a new suitor, and asked him what she should think of for the suitor to guess when he came to the castle the next morning.

"Listen to what I say," said the Magician; "you must choose something very easy: he is less likely to guess it then. Think of one of your shoes: he will never imagine it is that. Then cut his head off; and mind you do not forget to bring his eyes with you to-morrow night, that I may eat them."

The Princess courtesied low, and said she would not forget the eyes.

The Magician then opened the mountain and she flew home again, but the Traveller followed and flogged her so much with the rod, that she sighed quite deeply about the heavy hailstorm, and made as much haste as she could to get back to her bedroom through the window. The Traveller then returned to the inn where John stil' slept, took off his wings and laid down on the bed, for he was very tired. Early in the morning John awoke, and when his fellow-traveller got

up, he said that he had had a very wonderful dream about the Princess and her shoe; he therefore advised John to ask her if she had not thought of her shoe. Of course the Traveller knew this from what the Magician in the mountain had said.

"I may as well say that as anything else," said John. "Perhaps your dream may come true; still I will say farewell, for if I guess wrong I shall never see you again."

Then they embraced each other, and John went into the town and walked to the palace. The great hall was full of people, and the judges sat in arm-chairs, with eider-down cushions to rest their heads upon, because they had so much to think of. The old King stood near, wiping his eyes with his white pocket-handkerchief. When the Princess entered, she looked even more beautiful than she had appeared the day before, and greeted every one present most gracefully; but to John she gave her hand, and said, "Good morning to you."

Now came the time for John to guess what she was thinking of; and O, how kindly she looked at him as she spoke. But when he uttered the single word *shoe*, she turned as pale as a ghost; all her wisdom could not help her, for he had guessed rightly. O, how pleased the old King was! It was quite amusing to see how he capered about. All the people clapped their hands, both on his account and John's, who had guessed rightly the first time. His fellow traveller was glad also, when he heard how successful John had been. But John folded his hands, and thanked God, who, he felt quite sure, would help him again; and he knew he had to guess twice more. The evening passed pleasantly like the one preceding. While John slept, his companion flew behind the Princess to the mountain, and flogged her even harder than before; this time he had taken two rods with him. No one saw him go in with her, and he heard all that was said. The Princess this time was to think of a glove, and he told John as if he had again heard it in a dream. The next day, therefore, he was able to guess correctly the second time, and it caused great rejoicing at the palace. The whole court jumped about as they had seen the King do the day before, but the

Princess lay on the sofa, and would not say a single word. All now depended upon John. If he only guessed rightly the third time, he would marry the Princess, and reign over the kingdom after the death of the old King; but if he failed, he would lose his life, and the Magician would have his beautiful blue eyes. That evening John said his prayers and went to bed very early, and soon fell asleep calmly. But his companion tied on his wings to his shoulders, took three rods, and, with his sword at his side, flew to the palace. It was a very dark night, and so stormy that the tiles flew from the roofs of the houses, and the trees in the garden upon which the skeletons hung, bent themselves like reeds before the wind. The lightning flashed, and the thunder rolled in one long-continued peal all night. The window of the castle opened, and the Princess flew out. She was pale as death, but she laughed at the storm as if it were not bad enough. Her white mantle fluttered in the wind like a large sail, and the Traveller flogged her with the three rods till the blood trickled down, and at last she could scarcely fly; she contrived, however, to reach the mountain. "What a hail-storm!" she said, as she entered; "I have never been out in such weather as this."

"Yes, there may be too much of a good thing sometimes," said the Magician.

Then the Princess told him that John had guessed rightly the second time, and if he succeeded the next morning, he would win, and she could never come to the mountain again, or practice magic as she had done, and therefore she was quite unhappy.

"I will find out something for you to think of which he will never guess, unless he is a greater conjuror than myself," said the Magician. "But now let us be merry."

Then he took the Princess by both hands, and they danced with all the little gob'ins and jack o' lanterns in the room. The red spiders sprang here and there on the walls quite as merrily, and the flowers of fire appeared as if they were throwing out sparks. The owl beat the drum, the crickets whistled, and the grasshoppers played the mouth organ. It was a very ridiculous ball. After they had danced enough, the Princess

was obliged to go home, for fear she should be missed at the palace. The Magician offered to go with her, that they might be company to each other on the way. Then they flew away through the bad weather, and the Traveller followed them, and broke his three rods across their shoulders. The Magician had never been out in such a hail-storm as this. Just by the palace the Magician stopped to wish the Princess farewell, and to whisper in her ear, "To-morrow think of my head."

But the Traveller heard it, and just as the Princess slipped through the window into her bedroom, and the Magician turned round to fly back to the mountain, he seized him by the long black beard, and with his sabre cut off the wicked conjuror's head just behind his shoulders, so that he could not even see who it was. He threw the body into the sea to the fishes, and, after dipping the head into the water, he tied it up in a silk handkerchief, took it with him to the inn, and then went to bed. The next morning he gave John the handkerchief, and told him not to untie it till the Princess asked him what she was thinking of. There were so many people in the great hall of the palace that they stood as thick as radishes tied together in a bundle. The council sat in their arm-chairs with the white cushions. The old King wore new robes, and the golden crown and sceptre had been polished up so that he looked quite smart. But the Princess was very pale, and wore a black dress as if she were going to a funeral.

"What have I thought of?" asked the Princess, of John. He immediately untied the handkerchief, and was himself quite frightened when he saw the head of the ugly Magician. Every one shuddered, for it was terrible to look at; but the Princess sat like a statue and could not utter a single word. At length she rose and gave John her hand, for he had guessed rightly.

She looked at no one, but sighed deeply, and said, "You are my master now; this evening our marriage must take place."

"I am very much pleased to hear it," said the old King. "It is just what I wish."

Then all the people shouted "Hurrah!" The band played

music in the street, the bells rang, and the cake-women took the black crape off the sugar-sticks. There was universal joy. Three oxen, stuffed with ducks and chickens, were roasted whole in the market-place, where every one might help himself to a slice. The fountains spouted forth the most delicious wine, and whoever bought a penny loaf at the baker's received six large buns, full of raisins, as a present. In the evening the whole town was illuminated. The soldiers fired off cannons, and the boys let off crackers. There was eating and drinking, dancing and jumping everywhere. In the palace, the high-born gentlemen and the beautiful ladies danced with each other, and they could be heard at a great distance singing the following song: —

"Here are maidens, young and fair,
Dancing in the summer air;
Like to spinning-wheels at play,
Pretty maidens dance away, —
Dance the spring and summer through
Till the sole falls from your shoe."

But the Princess was still a witch, and she could not love John. His fellow-traveller had thought of that, so he gave John three feathers out of the swan's wings, and a little bottle with a few drops in it. He told him to place a large bath full of water by the Princess's bed, and put the feathers and the drops into it. Then, at the moment she was about to get into bed, he must give her a little push, so that she might fall into the water, and then dip her three times. This would destroy the power of the Magician, and she would love him very much.

John did all that his companion told him to do. The Princess shrieked aloud when he dipped her under the water the first time, and struggled under his hands in the form of a great black swan with fiery eyes. As she rose the second time from the water, the swan had become white, with a black ring round its neck. John allowed the water to close once more over the bird, and at the same time it changed into a most beautiful Princess. She was more lovely even than before, and thanked him, while her eyes sparkled with tears, for having broken the spell of the Magician.

The next day, the King came with the whole court to offer their congratulations, and stayed till quite late. Last of all came the Travelling Companion; he had his staff in his hand and his knapsack on his back. John kissed him many times and told him he must not go, he must remain with him, for he was the cause of all his good fortune. But the Traveller shook his head, and said gently and kindly, "No: my time is up now; I have only paid my debt to you. Do you remember the dead man whom the bad people wished to throw out of his coffin? You gave all you possessed that he might rest in his grave; I am the dead man." As he said this, he vanished.

The wedding festivities lasted a whole month. John and his Princess loved each other dearly, and the old King lived to see many a happy day, when he took their little children on his knees and let them play with his sceptre. And John became king over the whole country.

THE MARSH-KING'S DAUGHTER.

THE storks tell to their little ones many tales, all from the swamps and the bogs, and suited to the age and capacity of the hearers. The smallest youngsters are contented with mere sound, such as "kribble, krabble, plurremurre," and think it very grand; but the more advanced require something rational, or at least something about their family. Of the two most ancient and longest traditions that have been handed down among the storks, we are all acquainted with one — that about Moses, who was placed by his mother on the banks of the Nile, was found there by the king's daughter, was well brought up, and became a great man, such as has never been heard of since in the place where he was buried.

The other story is not well known, probably because it is a tale of home; yet it has passed down from one stork grandam to another for a thousand years, and each succeeding narrator has told it better and better, and now we shall tell it best of all.

The first pair of storks who related this tale had themselves something to do with its events. The place of their summer sojourn was at the Viking's castle, up by *the wild morass*, at Vendsyssel. It is in Hjöring district, away near Skagen, in the north of Jutland, speaking with geographical precision. It is now an enormous bog, as one can read in the County Guide. This place was once the bottom of the sea; but the waters have receded, and the ground has risen. It stretches itself for miles on all sides, surrounded by wet meadows and pools of water, by peat-bogs, cloudberries, and miserable stunted trees. A heavy mist almost always hangs over this place, and about seventy years ago wolves were found there. It is rightly called "the wild morass;" and one may imagine how savage it must have been, and how much swamp and sea must have existed there a thousand years ago. Yes, in these respects the same was to be seen there as is to be seen now. The rushes had the same height, the same sort of long leaves,

and blue-brown, feather-like flowers, that they bear now; the birch-tree stood with its white bark, and delicate drooping leaves, as now; and, in regard to the living creatures, the flies had the same sort of crape clothing as they wear now; and the storks' bodies were white, with black and red stockings. Mankind, on the contrary, at that time wore coats cut in another fashion from what they do in our days; but every one of them, serf or huntsman, whosoever he might be who trod upon the quagmire, fared a thousand years ago as they fare now: one step forward — they fell in, and sank down to the MARSH-KING, as *he* was called, who reigned below in the great morass kingdom. They also called him Gunke-king, but we like Marsh-king better, and we will give him that name, as the storks do. Very little is known about his rule, but that is, perhaps, a good thing.

Near the bog, close by Liimfjorden, lay the Viking's castle of three stories high, and with a tower and stone cellars. The storks had built their nest upon the roof of this dwelling. The female Stork sat upon her eggs, and felt certain they would be all hatched.

One evening the male Stork remained out very long, and when he came home he looked rumpled and flurried.

"I have something very terrible to tell thee," he said to the female Stork.

"Thou hadst better keep it to thyself," said she. "Remember I am sitting upon the eggs: a fright might do me harm, and the eggs might be injured."

"But it *must* be told thee," he replied. "She has come here — the daughter of our host in Egypt. She has ventured the long journey up hither, and she is lost."

"She who is of the fairies' race? Speak, then! Thou knowest that I cannot bear suspense while I am sitting."

"Know, then, mother, that she believed what the doctors said, which thou didst relate to me. She believed that the bog-plants up here could cure her invalid father; and she has flown hither, in the magic disguise of a swan, with the two other swan princesses, who every year come hither to the north to bathe and renew their youth. She has come, and she is lost."

"Thou dost spin the matter out so long," muttered the female Stork, "the eggs will be quite cooled. I cannot bear suspense just now."

"I will come to the point," replied the male. "This evening I went to the rushes where the quagmire could bear me. There came three swans. There was something in their motions which said to me, 'Take care; they are not real swans; they are only the appearance of swans, created by magic.' Thou wouldst have known as well as I that they were not of the right sort."

"Yes, surely," she said; "but tell me about the Princess. I am tired of hearing about the swans."

"In the midst of the morass — here, I must tell thee, it is like a lake," said the male Stork; "thou canst see a portion of it if thou wilt raise thyself up a moment — yonder, by the rushes and the green morass, lay a large stump of an alder-tree. The three swans alighted upon it, flapped their wings, and looked about them. One of them cast off her swan disguise, and I recognized in her our royal Princess from Egypt. She sat now with no other mantle around her than her long dark hair. I heard her desire the other two to take good care of her magic swan garb, while she ducked down under the water to pluck the flower which she thought she saw. They nodded, and raised the empty feather dress between them. 'What are they going to do with it?' said I to myself; and she probably asked herself the same question. The answer came too soon, for I saw them take flight up into the air with her charmed feather dress. 'Dive thou there!' they cried. 'Never more shalt thou fly in the form of a magic swan — never more shalt thou behold the land of Egypt. Dwell thou *in the wild morass!*' And they tore her magic disguise into a hundred pieces, so that the feathers whirled about as if there were a fall of snow; and away flew the two worthless princesses."

"It is shocking!" said the lady Stork; "I can't bear to hear it. Tell me what more happened."

"The Princess sobbed and wept. Her tears trickled down upon the trunk of the alder-tree, and then it moved; for it was the Marsh-king himself — he who dwells in the morass

I saw the trunk turn itself, and then there was no more trunk —it struck up two long miry branches like arms; then the poor child became dreadfully alarmed, and she sprang aside upon the green, slimy coating of the marsh; but it could not bear me, much less her, and she sank immediately in. The trunk of the alder-tree went down with her—it was that which had dragged her down; then arose to the surface large black bubbles, and all further traces of her disappeared. She is now buried in 'the wild morass;' and never, never shall she return to Egypt with the flower she sought. Thou couldst not have borne to have seen all this, mother."

"Thou ought not to tell me such a startling tale at a time like this. The eggs may suffer. The Princess can take care of herself: she will, no doubt, be rescued. If it had been me, or thee, or any of our family, it would have been all over with us."

"I will look after her every day, however," said the male Stork; and so he did.

A long time had elapsed, when one day he saw that far down from the bottom was shooting up a green stem, and when it reached the surface a leaf grew on it. The leaf became broader and broader; close by it came a bud; and one morning, when the Stork flew over it, the bud opened in the warm sunshine, and in the centre of it lay a beautiful infant, a little girl, just as if she had been taken out of a bath. She so strongly resembled the Princess from Egypt, that the Stork at first thought it was herself who had become an infant again; but when he considered the matter, he came to the conclusion that she was the daughter of the Princess and the Marsh-king, therefore she lay in the calyx of a water-lily.

"She cannot be left lying there," said the Stork to himself; "yet in my nest we are already too over-crowded. But a thought strikes me. The Viking's wife has no children; she has much wished to have a pet. I am often blamed for bringing little ones. I shall now, for once, do so in reality. I shall fly with this infant to the Viking's wife: it will be a great pleasure to her."

And the Stork took the little girl, flew to the castle, knocked

with his beak a hole in the window-pane of stretched bladder, laid the infant in the arms of the Viking's wife, then flew to his mate, and unburdened his mind to her; while the little ones listened attentively, for they were old enough now to do that.

"Only think, the Princess is not dead. She has sent her little one up here, and now it is well provided for."

"I told thee from the beginning it would be all well," said the mother Stork. "Turn thy thoughts now to thine own family. It is almost time for our long journey; I begin now to tingle under the wings. The cuckoo and the nightingale are already gone, and I hear the quails saying that we shall soon have a fair wind. Our young ones are quite able to go, I know that."

How happy the Viking's wife was, when, in the morning, she awoke and found the lovely little child lying on her breast! She kissed it and caressed it, but it screeched frightfully, and floundered about with its little arms and legs: IT evidently seemed little pleased. At last it cried itself to sleep, and as it lay there it was one of the most beautiful little creatures that could be seen. The Viking's wife was so pleased and happy, she took it into her head that her husband, with all his retainers, would come as unexpectedly as the little one had done; and she set herself and the whole household to work, in order that everything might be ready for their reception. The colored tapestry which she and her women had embroidered with representations of their gods — ODIN, THOR, and FREIA, as they were called — were hung up; the serfs were ordered to clean and polish the old shields with which the walls were to be decorated; cushions were laid on the benches; and dry logs of wood were heaped on the fire-place in the centre of the hall, so that the pile might be easily lighted. The Viking's wife labored so hard herself that she was quite tired by the evening, and slept soundly.

When she awoke towards morning she became much alarmed, for the little child was gone. She sprang up, lighted a twig of the pine-tree, and looked about; and, to her amazement, she saw, in the part of the bed to which she stretched her feet, not the beautiful infant, but a great ugly frog. She

was so much disgusted with it that she took up a heavy stick, and was going to kill the nasty creature; but it looked at her with such wonderfully sad and speaking eyes that she could not strike it. Again she searched about. The frog gave a faint, pitiable cry. She started up, and sprang from the bed to the window; she opened the shutters, and at the same moment the sun streamed in, and cast its bright beams upon the bed and upon the large frog; and all at once it seemed as if the broad mouth of the noxious animal drew itself in, and became small and red — the limbs stretched themselves into the most beautiful form — it was her own little lovely child that lay there, and no ugly frog.

"What is all this?" she exclaimed. "Have I dreamed a bad dream? That certainly is my pretty little elfin child lying yonder." And she kissed it and strained it affectionately to her heart; but it struggled, and tried to bite like the kitten of a wild cat.

Neither the next day nor the day after came the Viking, though he was on the way, but the wind was against him; it was for the storks. A fair wind for one is a contrary wind for another.

In the course of a few days and nights it became evident to the Viking's wife how things stood with the little child — that it was under the influence of some terrible witchcraft. By day it was as beautiful as an angel, but it had a wild, evil disposition; by night, on the contrary, it was an ugly frog, quiet, except for its croaking, and with melancholy eyes. It had two natures, that changed about, both without and within. This arose from the little girl whom the Stork had brought possessing by day her own mother's external appearance, and at the same time her father's temper; while by night, on the contrary, she showed her connection with him outwardly in her form, whilst her mother's mind and heart inwardly became hers. What art could release her from the power which exercised such sorcery over her? The Viking's wife felt much anxiety and distress about it, and yet her heart hung on the poor little being, of whose strange state she thought she should not dare to inform her husband when he came home; for he assuredly, as was the custom, would put the poor child out on

the high road, and let any one take it who would. The Viking's good-natured wife had not the heart to allow this; therefore she resolved that he should never see the child but by day.

At dawn of day the wings of the storks were heard fluttering over the roof. During the night more than a hundred pairs of storks had been making their preparations, and now they flew up to wend their way to the south.

"Let all the males be ready," was the cry. "Let their mates and little ones join them,"

"How light we feel!" said the young storks, who were all impatience to be off. "How charming to be able to travel to other lands!"

"Keep ye all together in one flock," cried the father and mother, "and don't chatter so much — it will take away your breath."

So they all flew away.

About the same time the blast of a horn sounding over the heath gave notice that the Viking had landed with all his men; they were returning home with rich booty from the Gallic coast, where the people, as in Britain, sang in their terror, —

"Save us from the savage Normands!"

What life and bustle were now apparent in the Viking's castle near "the wild morass"! Casks of mead were brought into the hall, the pile of wood was lighted, and horses were slaughtered for the grand feast which was to be prepared. The sacrificial priests sprinkled with the horses' warm blood the slaves who were to assist in the offering. The fires crackled, the smoke rolled up under the roof, the soot dropped from the beams; but people were accustomed to that. Guests were invited, and they brought handsome gifts; rancor and falseness were forgotten; they all became drunk together, and they thrust their doubled fists into each other's faces — which was a sign of good-humor. The skald — he was a sort of poet and musician, but at the same time a warrior — who had been with them, and had witnessed what he sang about, gave them a song, wherein they heard recounted all their

achievements in battle, and wonderful adventures. At the end of every verse came the same refrain, —

"Fortune dies, friends die, one dies one's self; but a glorious name never dies."

And then they all struck on their shields, and thundered with their knives or their knuckle-bones on the table, so that they made a tremendous noise.

The Viking's wife sat on the cross bench in the open banquet-hall. She wore a silk dress, gold bracelets, and large amber beads. She was in her grandest attire, and the skald named her also in his song, and spoke of the golden treasure she had brought her husband; and HE rejoiced in the lovely child he had only seen by daylight, in all its wondrous beauty. The fierce temper which accompanied her exterior charms pleased him. "She might become," he said, "a stalwart female warrior, and able to kill a giant adversary." She never even blinked her eyes when a practiced hand, in sport, cut off her eyebrows with a sharp sword.

The mead casks were emptied, others were brought up, and these, too, were drained; for there were folks present who could stand a good deal. To them might have been applied the old proverb, "The cattle know when to leave the pasture; but an unwise man never knows the depth of his stomach."

Yes, they all knew it; but people often knew the right thing, and do the wrong. They knew also that "one wears out one's welcome when one stays too long in another man's house;" but they remained there for all that. Meat and mead are good things. All went on merrily, and towards night the slaves slept amidst the warm ashes, and dipped their fingers into the fat skimmings of the soup, and licked them. It was a rare time!

And again the Viking went forth on an expedition, notwithstanding the stormy weather. He went after the crops were gathered in. He went with his men to the coast of Britain, — "it was only across the water," he said, — and his wife remained at home with her little girl: and it was soon to be seen that the foster mother cared almost more for the poor frog, with the honest eyes and plaintive croaking, than for the beauty who scratched and bit everybody around.

The raw, damp, autumn mist, that loosens the leaves from the trees, lay over wood and hedge; "Birdfeatherless," as the snow is called, was falling thickly; winter was close at hand. The sparrows seized upon the Storks' nest, and talked over, in their fashion, the absent owners. They themselves, the Stork pair, with all their young ones, where were they now?

The Storks were now in the land of Egypt, where the sun was shining warmly as with us on a lovely summer day. The tamarind and the acacia grew there; the moonbeams streamed over the temples of Mohammed. On the slender minarets sat many a pair of storks, reposing after their long journey; the whole immense flock had fixed themselves, nest by nest, amidst the mighty pillars and broken porticoes of temples and forgotten edifices. The date-tree elevated to a great height its broad leafy roof, as if it wished to form a shelter from the sun. The gray pyramids stood with their outlines sharply defined in the clear air towards the desert, where the ostrich knew he could use his legs; and the lion sat with his large grave eyes, and gazed on the marble sphinxes that lay half imbedded in the sand. The waters of the Nile had receded, and a great part of the bed of the river was swarming with frogs; and that, to the Stork family, was the pleasantest sight in the country where they had arrived. The young ones were astonished at all they saw.

"Such are the sights here, and thus it always is in our warm country," said the Stork-mother good-humoredly.

"Is there yet more to be seen?" they asked. "Shall we go much further into the country?"

"There is nothing more worth seeing," replied the Stork-mother. "Beyond this luxuriant neighborhood there is nothing but wild forests, where the trees grow close to each other, and are still more closely entangled by prickly creeping plants, weaving such a wall of verdure, that only the elephant, with his strong, clumsy feet, can there tread his way. The snakes are too large for us there, and the lizards too lively. If ye would go to the desert, ye will meet with nothing but sand; it will fill your eyes, it will come in gusts, and cover your feathers. No, it is best here. Here are frogs and grasshoppers. I shall remain here, and so shall you."

And they remained. The old ones sat in their nest upon the graceful minaret; they reposed themselves, and yet they had enough to do to smooth their wings and rub their beaks on their red stockings; and they stretched out their necks, saluted gravely, and lifted up their heads with their high foreheads and fine, soft feathers, and their brown eyes looked so wise.

The female young ones strutted about proudly among the juicy reeds, stole sly glances at the other young storks, made acquaintances, and slaughtered a frog at every third step, or went lounging about with little snakes in their bills, which they fancied looked well, and which they knew would taste well.

The male young ones got into quarrels; struck each other with their wings; pecked at each other with their beaks, even until blood flowed. Then they all thought of engaging themselves — the male and the female young ones. It was for that they lived, and they built nests, and got again into new quarrels; for in these warm countries every one is so hot-headed. Nevertheless they were very happy, and this was a great joy to the old storks. Every day there was warm sunshine — every day plenty to eat. They had nothing to think of except pleasure. But yonder, within the splendid palace of their Egyptian host, as they called him, there was but little pleasure to be found.

The wealthy, mighty chief lay upon his couch, stiffened in all his limbs — stretched out like a mummy in the centre of the grand saloon with the many-colored painted walls: it was as if he were lying in a tulip. Kinsmen and servants stood around him. Dead he was not, yet it could hardly be said that he lived. The healing bog-flower from the far-away lands in the north — that which she was to have sought and plucked for him — she who loved him best — would never now be brought. His beautiful young daughter, who in the magic garb of a swan had flown over sea and land away to the distant north, would never more return. "She is dead and gone," had the two swan ladies, her companions, declared on their return home. They had concocted a tale, and they told it as follows: —

"We had flown all three high up in the air when a sportsman saw us, and shot at us with his arrow. It struck our young friend; and, slowly singing her farewell song, she sank like a dying swan down into the midst of the lake in the wood. There, on its banks, under a fragrant weeping birch-tree, we buried her. But we took a just revenge: we bound fire under the wings of the swallow that built under the sportsman's thatched roof. It kindled — his house was soon in flames — he was burned within it — and the flames shone as far over the sea as to the drooping birch, where she is now earth within the earth. Alas! never will she return to the land of Egypt."

And they both wept bitterly; and the old Stork-father, when he heard it, rubbed his bill until it was quite sore.

"Lies and deceit!" he cried. "I should like, above all things, to run my beak into their breasts."

"And break it off," said the Stork-mother; "you would look remarkably well then. Think first of yourself, and the interests of your own family; everything else is of little consequence."

"I will, however, place myself upon the edge of the open cupola to-morrow, when all the learned and the wise are to assemble to take the case of the sick man into consideration: perhaps they may then arrive a little nearer to the truth."

And the learned and the wise met together, and talked much, deeply, and profoundly, of which the Stork could make nothing at all; and, sooth to say, there was no result obtained from all this talking, either for the invalid or for his daughter in "the wild morass;" yet, nevertheless, it was all very well to listen to — one *must* listen to a great deal in this world.

But now it were best, perhaps, for us to hear what had happened formerly. We shall then be better acquainted with the story — at least, we shall know as much as the Stork-father did.

"Love bestows life; the highest love bestows the highest life; it is only through love that his life can be saved," was what had been said; and it was amazingly wisely and well said, the learned declared.

"It is a beautiful thought," said the Stork-father.

"I don't quite comprehend it," said the Stork-mother, "but that is not my fault — it is the fault of the thought: though it is all one to me, for I have other things to think upon."

And then the learned talked of love between this and that — that there was a difference. Love such as lovers felt, and that between parents and children; between light and plants; how the sunbeams kissed the ground, and how, thereby, the seeds sprouted forth — it was all so diffusely and learnedly expounded, that it was impossible for the Stork-father to follow the discourse, much less to repeat it. It made him very thoughtful, however; he half closed his eyes, and actually stood on one leg the whole of the next day, reflecting on what he had heard. So much learning was difficult for him to digest.

But this much the Stork-father understood. He had heard both common people and great people speak as if they really felt it, that it was a great misfortune to many thousands, and to the country in general, that the King lay so ill, and that nothing could be done to bring about his recovery. It would be a joy and a blessing to all if he could but be restored to health.

"But where grew the health-giving flower that might cure him?" Everybody asked that question. Scientific writings were searched, the glittering stars were consulted, the wind and the weather. Every traveller that could be found was appealed to, until, at length, the learned and the wise, as before stated, pitched upon this: "Love bestows life — life to a father." And though this dictum was really not understood by themselves, they adopted it, and wrote it out as a prescription. "Love bestows life" — well and good. But how was this to be applied? Here they were at a stand. At length, however, they agreed that the Princess must be the means of procuring the necessary help, as she loved her father with all her heart and soul. They also agreed on a mode of proceeding. It is more than a year and a day since then. They settled that, when the new moon had just disappeared, she was to betake herself by night to the marble sphinx in the desert, to remove the sand from the entrance with her foot, and then to follow one of the long passages which led

to the centre of the great pyramids, where one of the most mighty monarchs of ancient times, surrounded by splendor and magnificence, lay in his mummy-coffin. There she was to lean her head over the corpse, and then it would be revealed to her where life and health for her father were to be found.

All this she had performed, and in a dream had been instructed that from the deep morass high up in the Danish land — the place was minutely described to her — she might bring home a certain lotus-flower, which beneath the water would touch her breast, that would cure him.

And therefore she had flown, in the magical disguise of a swan, from Egypt up to "the wild morass." All this was well known to the Stork-father and the Stork-mother: and now, though rather late, we also know it. We know that the Marsh-king dragged her down with him, and that, as far as regarded her home, she was dead and gone; only the wisest of them all said, like the Stork-mother, "She can take care of herself;" and, knowing no better, they waited to see what would turn up.

"I think I shall steal their swan garbs from the two wicked princesses," said the Stork-father; "then they will not be able to go to 'the wild morass' and do mischief. I shall leave the swan disguises themselves up yonder till there is some use for them."

"Where could you keep them?" asked the old female Stork.

"In our nest near 'the wild morass,'" he replied. "I and our eldest young ones can carry them; and if we find them too troublesome, there are plenty of places on the way where we can hide them until our next flight. One swan's dress would be enough for her, to be sure; but two are better. It it a good thing to have abundant means of travelling at command in a country so far north."

"You will get no thanks for what you propose doing," said the Stork-mother; "but you are the master, and must please yourself. I have nothing to say except at hatching-time."

At the Viking's castle near "the wild morass," whither the

Storks were flying in the spring, the little girl had received her name. She was called Helga; but this name was too soft for one with such dispositions as that lovely creature had. She grew fast month by month; and in a few years, even while the Storks were making their habitual journeys in autumn towards the Nile, in spring towards "the wild morass," the little child had grown up into a big girl, and before any one could have thought it, she was in her sixteenth year, and a most beautiful young lady — charming in appearance, but hard and fierce in temper — the most savage of the savage in that gloomy, cruel time.

It was a pleasure to her to sprinkle with her white hands the reeking blood of the horse slaughtered for an offering. She would bite, in her barbarous sport, the neck of the black-cock which was to be slaughtered by the sacrificial priest; and to her foster-father she said, in positive earnestness, —

"If your enemy were to come and cast ropes over the beams that support the roof, and drag them down upon your chamber whilst you were sleeping, I would not awaken you if I could — I would not hear it — the blood would tingle as it does now in that ear on which, years ago, you dared to give me a blow. I remember it well."

But the Viking did not believe she spoke seriously. Like every one else, he was fascinated by her extreme beauty, and never troubled himself to observe if the mind of little Helga were in unison with her looks. She would sit on horseback without a saddle, as if grown fast to the animal, and go at full gallop; nor would she spring off, even if her horse and other ill-natured ones were biting each other. Entirely dressed as she was, she would cast herself from the bank into the strong current of the fiord, and swim out to meet the Viking when his boat was approaching the land. Of her thick, splendid hair she had cut off the longest lock, and plaited for herself a string to her bow.

"Self-made is well made," she said.

The Viking's wife, according to the manners and customs of the age in which she lived, was strong in mind and decided in purpose; but with her daughter she was like a soft, timid woman. She was well aware that the dreadful child was under the influence of sorcery.

And Helga apparently took a malicious pleasure in frightening her mother. Often when the latter was standing on the balcony, or walking in the court-yard, Helga would place herself on the side of the well, throw her arms up in the air, and then let herself fall headlong into the narrow, deep hole, where, with her frog nature, she would duck and raise herself up again, and then crawl up as if she had been a cat, and run dripping with water into the grand saloon, so that the green rushes which were strewed over the floor partook of the wet stream.

There was but one restraint upon little Helga — that was the *evening twilight.* In it she became quiet and thoughtful — would allow herself to be called and guided; then too she would seem to feel some affection for her mother; and when the sun sank, and the outer and inward change took place, she would sit still and sorrowful, shriveled up into the form of a frog, though the head was now much larger than that little animal's, and therefore she was uglier than ever: she looked like a miserable dwarf, with a frog's head and webbed fingers. There was something very sad in her eyes; voice she had none except a kind of croak, like a child sobbing in its dreams. Then would the Viking's wife take her in her lap; she would forget the ugly form, and look only at the melancholy eyes; and more than once she exclaimed, —

"I could almost wish that thou wert always my dumb fairy-child, for thou art more fearful to look at when thy form resumes its beauty."

And she wrote Runic rhymes against enchantment and infirmity, and threw them over the poor creature; but there was no change for the better.

"One could hardly believe that she was once so small as to lie in the calyx of a water-lily," said the Stork-father. She is now quite a woman, and the image of her Egyptian mother. Her, alas! we have never seen again. She did not take good care of herself, as thou didst expect and the learned people predicted. Year after year I have flown backward and forward over 'the wild morass,' but never have I seen a sign of her. Yes, I can assure thee, during the years we have been

coming up here, when I have arrived some days before thee, that I might mend the nest and set everything in order in it, I have for a whole night flown, as if I had been an owl or a bat, continually over the open water, but to no purpose. We have had no use either for the two swan disguises which I and the young ones dragged all the way up here from the banks of the Nile. It was hard enough work, and it took us three journeys to bring them up. They have now lain here for years at the bottom of our nest; and should a fire by any chance break out, and the Viking's castle be burned down, they would be lost."

"And our good nest would be lost," said the old female Stork; "but thou thinkest less of that than of these feather things and thy bog Princess. Thou hadst better go down to her at once, and remain in the mire. Thou art a hard-hearted father to thine own: *that* I have said since I laid my first eggs. What if I or one of our young ones should get an arrow under our wings from that fierce, crazy brat at the Viking's? She does not care what she does. This has been much longer our home than hers, she ought to recollect. We do not forget our duty; we pay our rent every year — a feather, an egg, and a young one — as we ought to do. Dost thou think that when *she* is outside *I* can venture to go below, as in former days, or as I do in Egypt, where I am almost everybody's comrade, not to mention that I can there even peep into the pots and pans without any fear? No; I sit up here and fret myself about her — the hussy! and I fret myself at thee too. Thou shouldst have left her lying in the water-lily, and there would have been an end of her."

"Thy words are much harder than thy heart," said the Stork-father. "I know thee better than thou knowest thyself."

And then he made a hop, flapped his wings twice, stretched his legs out behind him, and away he flew, or rather sailed, without moving his wings, until he had got to some distance. Then he brought his wings into play; the sun shone upon his white feathers; he stretched his head and his neck forward, and hastened on his way.

"He is, nevertheless, still the handsomest of them all," said his admiring mate; "but I will not tell him that."

Late that autumn the Viking returned home, bringing with him booty and prisoners. Among these was a young Christian priest, one of the men who denounced the gods of the Northern mythology. Often about this time was the new religion talked of in baronial halls and ladies' bowers — the religion that was spreading over all lands of the south, and which, with the holy Ansgarius,[1] had even reached as far as Hedeby. Even little Helga had heard of the pure religion of Christ, who, from love to mankind, had given Himself as a sacrifice to save them; but with her it went in at one ear and out at the other, to use a common saying. The word *love* alone seemed to have made some impression upon her, when she shrunk into the miserable form of a frog in the closed-up chamber. But the Viking's wife had listened to, and felt herself wonderfully affected by, the rumor and the saga about the Son of the one only true God.

The men, returning from their expedition, had told of the splendid temples of costly hewn stone raised to Him whose errand was love. A pair of heavy golden vessels, beautifully wrought out of pure gold, were brought home, and both had a charming, spicy perfume. They were the censers which the Christian priests swung before the altars, on which blood never flowed; but wine and the consecrated bread were changed into the blood and body of Him who had given Himself for generations yet unborn.

[1] Ansgarius was originally a monk from the monastery of New Corbie, in Saxony, to which several of the monks of Corbie in France had migrated in A. D. 822. Its abbot, Paschasius Radbert, who died in 865, was, according to Cardinal Bellarmine, the first fully to propagate the belief, now entertained in the Roman Catholic Church, of the corporeal presence of the Saviour in the sacrament. Ansgarius, who was very enthusiastic, accepted a mission to the North of Europe, and preached Christianity in Denmark and Sweden. Jutland was for some time the scene of his labors, and he made many converts there; also in Sleswig, where a Christian school for children was established, who, on leaving it, were sent to spread Christianity throughout the country. An archbishopric was founded by the then Emperor of Germany, in conformity to a plan which had been traced, though not carried out, by Charlemagne; and this was bestowed upon Ansgarius. But the church he had built was burnt by some still heathen Danes, who, gathering a large fleet, invaded Hamburg, which they also reduced to ashes. The Emperor then constituted him Bishop of Bremen. — *Trans.*

To the deep, stone-walled cellars of the Viking's castle was the young captive, the Christian priest, consigned, fettered with cords round his feet and his hands. He was as beautiful as Baldur to look at, said the Viking's wife, and she was grieved at his fate; but young Helga wished that he should be hamstrung, and bound to the tails of wild oxen.

"Then I should let loose the dogs. Halloo! Then away over bogs and pools to the naked heath. Ha! that would be something pleasant to see — still pleasanter to follow him on the wild journey."

But the Viking would not hear of his being put to such a death. On the morrow, as a scoffer and denier of the high gods, he was to be offered up as a sacrifice to them upon the blood stone in the sacred grove. He was to be the first human sacrifice ever offered up there.

Young Helga prayed that she might be allowed to sprinkle with the blood of the captive the images of the gods and the assembled spectators. She sharpened her gleaming knife, and, as one of the large, ferocious dogs, of which there were plenty in the court-yard, leaped over her feet, she stuck the knife into his side.

"That is to prove the blade," she exclaimed.

And the Viking's wife was shocked at the savage-tempered, evil-minded girl; and when night came, and the beauteous form and disposition of her daughter changed, she poured forth her sorrow to her in warm words, which came from the bottom of her heart.

The hideous frog with the ogre head stood before her, and fixed its brown, sad eyes upon her, listened, and seemed to understand with a human being's intellect.

"Never, even to my husband, have I hinted at the double sufferings I have through you," said the Viking's wife. "There is more sorrow in my heart on your account than I could have believed. Great is a mother's love. But love never enters your mind. Your heart is like a lump of cold, hard mud. From whence did you come to my house?"

Then the ugly shape trembled violently; it seemed as if these words touched an invisible tie between the body and the soul — large tears started to its eyes.

"Your time of trouble will come some day, depend on it," said the Viking's wife, "and dreadful will it also be for me. Better had it been had you been put out on the highway, and the chillness of the night had benumbed you until you slept in death;" and the Viking's wife wept salt tears, and went angry and distressed away, passing round behind the loose skin partition that hung over an upper beam to divide the chamber.

Alone in a corner sat the shriveled frog. She was mute, but after a short interval she uttered a sort of half-suppressed sigh. It was as if in sorrow a new life had awoke in some nook of her heart. She took a step forward, listened, advanced again, and grasping with her awkward hands the heavy bar that was placed across the door, she removed it softly, and quietly drew away the pin that was stuck in over the latch. She then seized the lighted lamp that stood in the room beyond: it seemed as if a great resolution had given her strength. She made her way down to the dungeon, drew back the iron bolt that fastened the trap-door, and slid down to where the prisoner was lying. He was sleeping. She touched him with her cold, clammy hand; and when he awoke, and beheld the disgusting creature, he shuddered as if he had seen an evil apparition. She drew her knife, severed his bonds, and beckoned to him to follow her.

He named holy names, made the sign of the cross, and when the strange shape stood without moving, he exclaimed, in the words of the Bible, —

"'Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.' Who art thou? How comes it that, under the exterior of such an animal, there is so much compassionate feeling?"

The frog beckoned to him, and led him, behind tapestry that concealed him, through private passages, out to the stables, and pointed to a horse. He sprang on it, and she also jumped up; and, placing herself before him, she held by the animal's mane. The prisoner understood her movement; and at full gallop they rode, by a path he never could have found, away to the open heath.

He forgot her ugly form; he knew that the grace and

mercy of God could be evinced even by means of hobgoblins; he put up earnest prayers, and sang holy hymns. She trembled. Was it the power of the prayers and hymns that affected her thus? or was it a cold shivering at the approach of morning, that was about to dawn? What was it that she felt? She raised herself up into the air, attempted to stop the horse, and was on the point of leaping down; but the Christian priest held her fast with all his might, and chanted a psalm, which he thought would have sufficient strength to overcome the influence of the witchcraft under which she was kept in the hideous disguise of a frog. And the horse dashed more wildly forward, the heavens became red, the first ray of the sun burst forth through the morning sky, and with that clear gush of light came the miraculous change — she was the young beauty, with the cruel, demoniacal spirit. The astonished priest held the loveliest maiden in his arms he had ever beheld; but he was horror-struck, and, springing from the horse, he stopped it, expecting to see it also the victim of some fearful sorcery. Young Helga sprang at the same moment to the ground, her short, childlike dress reaching no farther than her knees. Suddenly she drew her sharp knife from her belt, and rushed furiously upon him.

"Let me but reach thee — let me but reach thee, and my knife shall find its way to thy heart. Thou art pale in thy terror, beardless slave!"

She closed with him; a severe struggle ensued, but it seemed as if some invincible power bestowed strength upon the Christian priest. He held her fast; and the old oak-tree close by came to his assistance, by binding down her feet with its roots, which were half loosened from the earth, her feet having slid under them. There was a fountain near, and he splashed the clear, fresh water over her face and neck, commanding the unclean spirit to pass out of her, and signed her according to the Christian rites; but the baptismal water had no power where the fountain of belief had not streamed upon the heart.

Yet still he was the victor. Yes, more than human strength could have accomplished against the powers of evil, lay in his acts, which, as it were, overpowered her. She suffered

her arms to sink, and gazed with wondering looks and blanched cheeks upon the man, whom she deemed some mighty wizard, strong in sorcery and the black art. These were mystic Runes he had recited, and magic characters he had traced in the air. Not for the glancing axe or the well-sharpened knife, if he had brandished these before her eyes, would they have blinked, or would she have winced; but she winced now when he made the sign of the cross upon her brow and bosom, and she stood now like a tame bird, her head bowed down upon her breast.

Then he spoke kindly to her of the work of mercy she had performed towards him that night, when, in the ugly disguise of a frog, she had come to him, had loosened his bonds, and brought him forth to light and life. She also was bound — bound even with stronger fetters than he had been, he said; but she also should be set free, and like him, attain to light and life. He would take her to Hedeby, to the holy Ansgarius. There, in the Christian city, the witchcraft in which she was held would be exorcised; but not before him must she sit on horseback, even if she wished it herself — he dared not place her there.

"Thou must sit behind me on the horse, not before me. Thine enchanting beauty has a magic power bestowed by the evil one. I fear it; and yet the victory shall be mine through Christ."

He knelt down and prayed fervently. It seemed as if the surrounding wood had been consecrated into a holy temple; the birds began to sing as if they belonged to the new congregation; the wild thyme sent forth its fragrant scent, as if to take the place of incense; while the Priest proclaimed these Bible words: "To give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death; to guide our feet into the way of peace."

And he spoke of everlasting life; and as he discoursed, the horse which had carried them in their wild flight stood still, and pulled at the large bramble-berries, so that the ripest ones fell on little Helga's hand, inviting her to pluck them for herself.

She allowed herself patiently to be lifted upon the horse,

and she sat on its back like a somnambulist, who was neither in a waking nor a sleeping state. The Christian priest tied two small green branches together in the form of a cross, which he held high aloft; and thus they rode through the forest, which became thicker and thicker, and the path, if path it could be called, taking them further into it. The blackthorn stood as if to bar their way, and they had to ride round outside of it; the trickling streams swelled no longer into mere rivulets, but into stagnant pools, and they had to ride round them; but as the soft wind that played among the foliage of the trees was refreshing and strengthening to the travellers, so the mild words that were spoken in Christian charity and truth served to lead the benighted one to light and life.

It is said that a constant dripping of water will make a hollow in the hardest stone, and that the waves of the sea will, in time, round the edges of the sharpest rocks. The dew of grace which fell for little Helga, softened the hard, and smoothed the sharp, in her nature. True, it was not discernible yet in her, nor was she aware of it herself. What knows the seed in the ground of the effect which the refreshing dew and the warm sunbeams are to have in producing from it vegetation and flowers?

As a mother's song to her child, unmarked, makes an impression upon its infant mind, and it prattles after her several of the words without understanding them, but in time these words arrange themselves into order, and they become clearer, so in the case of Helga worked *that word* which is mighty to save.

They rode out of the forest, and crossed an open heath; then again they entered a pathless wood, where, towards evening, they encountered a band of robbers.

"Whence didst thou steal that beautiful wench?" they shouted, as they stopped the horse, and dragged its two riders down; for they were strong and robust men. The Priest had no other weapon than the knife which he had taken from little Helga. With that he now stood on his defense. One of the robbers swung his ponderous axe, but the young Christian fortunately sprang aside in time to avoid the blow, which then fell on the luckless horse, and the sharp edge entered

into its neck ; blood streamed from the wound, and the poor animal fell to the ground. Helga, who had only at that moment awoke from her long, deep trance, sprang forward, and cast herself over the gasping creature. The Christian priest placed himself before her as a shield and protection from the lawless men ; but one of them struck him on the forehead with an iron hammer, so that it was dashed in, and the blood and brains gushed forth, while he fell down dead on the spot.

The robbers seized Helga by her white arms ; but at that moment the sun went down, its last beam faded away, and she was transformed into a hideous-looking frog. The pale green mouth stretched itself over half the face ; its arms became thin and slimy ; and a broad hand, with webbed-like membranes, extended itself like a fan. Then the robbers withdrew their hold of her in terror and astonishment. She stood like the ugly animal among them, and, according to the nature of a frog, she began to hop about, and, jumping faster than usual, she soon escaped into the depths of the thicket. The robbers were then convinced that it was some evil artifice of the mischief-loving Loke, or else some secret magical deception ; and in dismay they fled from the place.

The full moon had risen, and its silver light penetrated even the gloomy recesses of the forest, when from among the low, thick brushwood, in the frog's hideous form, crept the young Helga. She stopped when she reached the bodies of the Christian priest and the slaughtered horse ; she gazed on them with eyes that seemed full of tears, and the frog uttered a sound that somewhat resembled the sob of a child who was on the point of crying. She threw herself first over the one, then over the other ; then took water up in her webbed hand, and poured it over them ; but all was in vain — they were dead, and dead they would remain. She knew that. Wild beasts would soon come and devour their bodies. No, that must not be ; therefore she determined to dig a grave in the ground for them, but she had nothing to dig it with except the branch of a tree and both her own hands. With these she worked away until her fingers bled. She found she made so little progress,

that she feared the work would never be completed. Then she took water, and washed the dead man's face; covered it with fresh green leaves; brought large boughs of the trees, and laid them over him; sprinkled dead leaves amongst the branches; fetched the largest stones she could carry, and placed them over the bodies, and filled up the openings with moss. When she had done all this she thought that their tomb might be strong and safe; but during her long and arduous labor the night had passed away. The sun arose, and young Helga stood again in all her beauty, with bloody hands, and, for the first time, with tears on her blooming cheeks.

During this change it seemed as if two natures were wrestling within her; she trembled, looked around her as if awakening from a painful dream, then seized upon the slender branch of a tree near, and held fast by it as if for support; and in another moment she climbed like a cat up to the top of the tree, and placed herself firmly there. For a whole long day she sat there like a frightened squirrel in the deep loneliness of the forest, where all is still and dead, people say. Dead! There flew by butterflies chasing each other, either in sport or in strife. There were ant-hills near, each covered with hundreds of little busy laborers, passing in swarms to and fro. In the air danced innumerable gnats; crowds of buzzing flies swept past; lady-birds, dragon-flies, and other winged insects, floated hither and thither; earth-worms crept forth from the damp ground; moles crawled about; otherwise it was still — *dead*, as people say and think.

None remarked Helga, except the jays that flew screeching to the top of the tree where she sat; they hopped on the branches around her with impudent curiosity, but there was something in the glance of her eye that speedily drove them away; they were none the wiser about her, nor, indeed, was she about herself. When the evening approached, and the sun began to sink, the transformation time rendered a change of position necessary. She slipped down the tree, and, as the last ray of the sun faded away, she was again the shriveled frog, with the webbed-fingered hands; but her eyes beamed now with a charming expression, which they had not worn in the beautiful form; they were the mildest, sweetest girlish

eyes that glanced from behind the mask of a frog — they bore witness to the deeply thinking human mind, the deeply feeling human heart; and these lovely eyes burst into tears, — tears of unfeigned sorrow.

Close to the lately raised grave lay the cross of green boughs that had been tied together — the last work of him who was now dead and gone. Helga took it up, and the thought presented itself to her that it would be well to place it amidst the stones, above him and the slaughtered horse. With the sad remembrances thus awakened, her tears flowed faster; and in the fullness of her heart she scratched the same sign in the earth round the grave — it would be a fence that would guard it so well. And just as she was forming, with both of her hands, the figure of the cross, her magic disguise fell off like a torn glove; and when she had washed herself in the clear water of the fountain near, and in amazement looked at her delicate white hands, she made the sign of the cross between herself and the dead Priest; then her lips moved, then her tongue was loosened; and that name which so often, during the ride through the forest, she had heard spoken and chanted, became audible from her mouth — she exclaimed, "JESUS CHRIST!"

When the frog's skin had fallen off she was again the beautiful maiden; but her head drooped heavily, her limbs seemed to need repose — she slept.

Her sleep was only a short one, however; she awoke about midnight, and before her stood the dead horse full of life; its eyes glittered, and light seemed to proceed from the wound in its neck. Close to it the dead Christian priest showed himself — "more beautiful than Baldur," the Viking's wife would have said; and yet he came as a flash of fire.

There was an earnestness in his large, mild eyes, a searching, penetrating look — grave, almost stern — that thrilled the young proselyte to the utmost depths of her heart. Helga trembled before him; and her memory awoke as if with the power it would exercise on the great day of doom. All the kindness that had been bestowed on her, every affectionate word that had been said to her, came back to her mind with an impression deeper than they had ever before made. She

understood that it was love that, during the days of trial here, had supported her — those days of trial in which the offspring of a being with a soul, and a form of mud, had writhed and struggled. She understood that she had only followed the promptings of her own disposition, and had done nothing to help herself. All had been bestowed on her — all had been ordained for her. She bowed herself in lowly humility and shame before Him who must be able to read every thought of the heart; and at that moment she felt as if a purifying flame darted through her — a light from the Holy Spirit.

"Daughter of the dust!" said the Christian priest, "from dust, from earth hast thou arisen — from earth shalt thou again arise! A ray from God's invisible sun shall stream on thee. No soul shall be lost. But far off is the time when life takes flight into eternity. I come from the land of the dead Thou also shalt once pass through the dark valley into yon lofty realms of brightness, where grace and perfection dwell. I shall not guide thee now to Hedeby for Christian baptism. First must thou disperse the slimy surface over the deep morass, draw up the living root of thy life and thy cradle, and perform thy appointed task, ere thou darest to seek the holy rite."

And he lifted her up on the horse, and gave her a golden censer like those she had formerly seen at the Viking's castle; and strong was the perfume which issued from it. The open wound on the forehead of the murdered man shone like a diadem of brilliants. He took the cross from the grave, and raised it high above him; then away they went through the air, away over the rustling woods, away over the mountains where the giant heroes are buried, sitting on the slaughtered steed. Still onward the phantom forms pursued their way; and in the clear moonlight glittered the gold circlet round their brows, and the mantle fluttered in the breeze. The magic dragon, who was watching over his treasures, raised his head and gazed at them. The hill dwarfs peeped out from their mountain recesses and plough-furrows. There were swarms of them, with red, blue, and green lights, that looked like the numerous sparks in the ashes of newly-burned paper.

Away over forest and heath, over limpid streams and stag-

nant pools, they hastened towards "the wild morass," and over it they flew in wide circles. The Christian priest held aloft the cross, which looked as dazzling as burnished gold, and as he did so he chanted the mass hymns. Little Helga sang with him as a child follows its mother's song. She swung the censer about as if before the altar, and there came a perfume so strong, so powerful in its effect, that it caused the reeds and sedges to blossom; every sprout shot up from the deep bottom; everything that had life raised itself up; and with the rest arose a mass of water-lilies, which looked like a carpet of embroidered flowers. Upon it lay a sleeping female, young and beautiful. Helga thought she beheld herself mirrored in the calm water; but it was her mother whom she saw — the Marsh-king's wife — the Princess from the banks of the Nile.

The dead Christian priest prayed that the sleeper might be lifted upon the horse. At first the latter sank under the additional burden, as if its body were but a winding-sheet fluttering in the wind; but the sign of the cross gave strength to the airy phantom, and all three rode on it to the solid ground.

Then crowed the cock at the Viking's castle, and the apparitions seemed to disappear in a mist, which was wafted away by the wind; but the mother and daughter stood together.

"Is that myself I behold in the deep water?" exclaimed the mother.

"Is that myself I see on the shining surface?" said the daughter.

And they approached each other till form met form in a warm embrace, and wildly the mother's heart beat when she perceived the truth.

"My child! my heart's own flower! my lotus from the watery deep!"

And she encircled her daughter with her arm, and wept. Her tears caused a new sensation to Helga — they were the baptism of love for her.

"I came hither in the magic disguise of a swan, and I threw it off," said the mother. "I sank through the swaying mire deep into the mud of the morass, which like a wall

closed around me; but soon I perceived that I was in a fresher stream — some power drew me deeper and still deeper down. I felt my eyelids heavy with sleep; I slumbered and I dreamed. I thought that I was again in the interior of the Egyptian pyramid, but before me still stood the heaving alder-trunk that had so terrified me on the surface of the morass. I saw the cracks in the bark, and they changed their appearance, and became hieroglyphics. It was the mummy's coffin I was looking at; it burst open, and out issued from it the monarch of a thousand years ago — the mummy form, black as pitch, dark and shining as a wood-snail, or as that thick, slimy mud. It was the Marsh-king, or the mummy of the pyramids; I knew not which. He threw his arms around me, and I felt as if I were dying. I only felt that I was alive again when I found something warm on my breast, and there a little bird was flapping with its wings, twittering and singing. It flew from my breast high up in the dark, heavy space; but a long green string bound it still to me. I heard and I comprehended its tones and its longing: 'Freedom! Sunshine! To the father!' Then I thought of my father in my distant home, that dear, sunny land — my life, my affection — and I loosened the cord, and let it flutter away home to my father. Since that hour I have not dreamed. I have slept a long, dark, heavy sleep until now, when the strange sounds and perfume awoke me and set me free."

That green tie between the mother's heart and the bird's wings, where now did it flutter? what now had become of it? The Stork alone had seen it. The cord was the green stem; the knot was the shining flower — the cradle for that child who now had grown up in beauty, and again rested near her mother's heart.

And as they stood there embracing each other, the Stork-father flew in circles round them, hastened back to his nest, took from it the magic feather disguises that had been hidden away for so many years, cast one down before each of them, and then joined them as they raised themselves from the ground like two white swans.

"Let us now have some chat," said the Stork-father; "now we understand each other's language, even though one bird's

beak is not exactly made after the pattern of another's. It is most fortunate that you came to-night; to-morrow we should all have been away — the mother, the young ones, and myself. We are off to the south. Look at me! I am an old friend from the country where the Nile flows, and so is the mother, though there is more kindness in her heart than in her tongue. She always believed that the Princess would make her escape. The young ones and I brought these swan garbs up here. Well, how glad I am, and how fortunate it is that I am here still! At dawn of day we shall take our departure — a large party of storks. We shall fly foremost, and if you will follow us you will not miss the way. The young ones and myself will have an eye to you."

"And the lotus flower I was to have brought," said the Egyptian Princess; "it shall go within the swan disguise, by my side, and I shall have my heart's darling with me. Then homewards — homewards!"

Then Helga said that she could not leave the Danish land until she had once more seen her foster-mother, the Viking's excellent wife. To Helga's thoughts arose every pleasing recollection, every kind word, even every tear her adopted mother had shed on her account; and, at that moment, she felt that she almost loved that mother best.

"Yes, we must go to the Viking's castle," said the Stork; "there my young ones and their mother await me. How they will stare! The mother does not speak much; but, though she is rather abrupt, she means well. I will presently make a little noise, that she may know we are coming."

And he clattered with his bill as he and the swans flew close to the Viking's castle.

Within it all were lying in deep sleep. The Viking's wife had retired late to rest; she lay in anxious thought about little Helga, who now for full three days and nights had disappeared along with the Christian priest: she had probably assisted him in his escape, for it was her horse that was missing from the stables. By what power had all this been accomplished? The Viking's wife thought upon the wondrous works she had heard had been performed by the immaculate Christ, and by those who believed on him and followed him.

Her changing thoughts assumed the shapes of life in her dreams; she fancied she was still awake, lost in deep reflection; she imagined that a storm arose — that she heard the sea roaring in the east and in the west, the waves dashing from the Kattegat and the North Sea; the hideous serpents which encircled the earth in the depths of the ocean struggling in deadly combat. It was the night of the gods — RAGNAROK, as the heathens called the last hour, when all should be changed, even the high gods themselves. The reverberating horn sounded, and forth over the rainbow[1] rode the gods, clad in steel, to fight the final battle; before them flew the winged Valkyries, and the rear was brought up by the shades of the dead giant-warriors; the whole atmosphere was illuminated around them by the Northern lights, but darkness conquered all — it was an awful hour!

And near the terrified Viking's wife sat upon the floor little Helga in the ugly disguise of the frog; and she shivered and worked her way up to her foster-mother, who took her in her lap, and, disgusting as she was in that form, lovingly caressed her. The air was filled with the sounds of the clashing of swords, the blows of clubs, the whizzing of arrows, like a violent hail-storm. The time was come when heaven and earth should be destroyed, the stars should fall, and all be swallowed up below in Surtur's fire; but a new earth and a new heaven she knew were to come; the corn was to wave where the sea now rolled over the golden sands; the unknown God at length reigned; and to him ascended Baldur, the mild, the lovable, released from the kingdom of death. He came; the Viking's wife beheld him; she recognized his countenance: it was that of the captive Christian priest. "Immaculate Christ!" she cried aloud; and whilst uttering this holy name, she impressed a kiss upon the ugly brow of the frog-child. Then fell the magic disguise, and Helga stood before her in all her radiant beauty, gentle as she had never looked before, and with speaking eyes. She kissed her foster-mother's hands, blessed her for all the care and kindness which she, in the days of distress and trial, had

[1] The Bridge of Heaven in the fables of the Scandinavian mythology. — *Trans.*

lavished upon her; thanked her for the thoughts with which she had inspired her mind; thanked her for mentioning *that name* which she now repeated, "Immaculate Christ!" and then lifting herself up in the suddenly adopted shape of a graceful swan, little Helga spread her wings widely out with the rustling sound of a flock of birds of passage on the wing, and in another moment she was gone.

The Viking's wife awoke, and on the outside of her casement were to be heard the same rustling and flapping of wings. It was the time, she knew, when the storks generally took their departure; it was them she heard. She wished to see them once more before their journey to the south, and bid them farewell. She got up, went out on the balcony, and then she saw, on the roof of an adjoining outhouse, stork upon stork, while all around the place, above the highest trees, flew crowds of them, wheeling in large circles; but below, on the brink of the well, where little Helga had but so lately often sat, and frightened her with her wild actions, sat now two swans, looking up at her with expressive eyes; and she remembered her dream, which seemed to her almost a reality. She thought of Helga in the appearance of a swan; she thought of the Christian priest, and felt a strange gladness in her heart.

The swans fluttered their wings and bowed their necks, as if they were saluting her; and the Viking's wife opened her arms, as if she understood them, and smiled amidst her tears and manifold thoughts.

Then, with a clattering of bills and a noise of wings, the storks all turned towards the south to commence their long journey.

"We will not wait any longer for the swans," said the Stork-mother. "If they choose to go with us, they must come at once; we cannot be lingering here till the plovers begin their flight. It is pleasant to travel as we do in a family party, not like the chaffinches and strutting cocks. Among their species the males fly by themselves, and the females by themselves: that, to say the least of it, is not at all seemly. What a miserable sound the stroke of the swans' wings has, compared with ours!"

"Every one flies in his own way," said the Stork-father. "Swans fly slantingly, cranes in triangles, and plovers in serpentine windings."

"Name not serpents or snakes when we are about to fly up yonder," said the Stork-mother. "It will only make the young ones long for a sort of food which they can't get just now."

"Are these the high hills, beneath yonder, of which I have heard?" asked Helga, in the disguise of a swan.

"These are thunder-clouds driving under us," replied her mother.

"What are these white clouds that seem so stationary?" asked Helga.

"These are the mountains covered with everlasting snow that thou seest," said her mother; and they flew over the Alps toward the blue Mediterranean.

"There is Africa! there is Egypt!" cried, in joyful accents, under her swan disguise, the daughter of the Nile, as high up in the air she descried, like a whitish-yellow, billow-shaped streak, her native soil.

The storks also saw it, and quickened their flight.

"I smell the mud of the Nile and the wet frogs," exclaimed the Stork-mother. "It makes my mouth water. Yes, now ye shall have nice things to eat, and ye shall see the marabout, the ibis, and the crane: they are all related to our family, but are not nearly so handsome as we are. They think a great deal, however, of themselves, particularly the ibis: he has been spoiled by the Egyptians, who make a mummy of him, and stuff him with aromatic herbs. I would rather be stuffed with living frogs; and that is what ye would all like also, and what ye shall be. Better a good dinner when one is living, than to be made a grand show of when one is dead. That is what I think, and I know I am right."

"The storks have returned," was told in the splendid house on the banks of the Nile, where, within the open hall, upon soft cushions, covered with a leopard's skin, the King lay, neither living nor dead, hoping for the lotus flower from the deep morass of the north. His kindred and his attendants were standing around him.

And into the hall flew two magnificent white swans — they had arrived with the storks. They cast off the dazzling magic feather garbs, and there stood two beautiful women, as like each other as two drops of water. They leaned over the pallid, faded old man; they threw back their long hair; and, as little Helga bowed over her grandfather, his cheeks flushed, his eyes sparkled, life returned to his stiffened limbs. The old man rose hale and hearty; his daughter and his granddaughter pressed him in their arms, as if in a glad morning salutation after a long, heavy dream.

And there was joy throughout the palace, and in the Storks' nest also; but *there* the joy was principally for the good food, the swarms of nice frogs; and whilst the learned noted down in haste, and very carelessly, the history of the two princesses and of the lotus flower as an important event, and a blessing to the royal house, and to the country in general, the old Storks related the history in their own way to their own family; but not until they had all eaten enough, else these would have had other things to think of than listening to any story.

"Now thou wilt be somebody," whispered the Stork-mother, "it is only reasonable to expect that."

"O! what should *I* be?" said the Stork-father. "And what have *I* done? Nothing!"

"Thou hast done more than all the others put together. Without thee and the young ones the two princesses would never have seen Egypt again, or cured the old man. Thou wilt be nothing! Thou shouldst, at the very least, be appointed court doctor, and have a title bestowed on thee, which our young ones would inherit, and their little ones after them. Thou dost look already exactly like an Egyptian doctor in my eyes."

The learned and the wise lectured upon "the fundamental notion," as they called it, which pervaded the whole tissue of events. "Love bestows life." Then they expounded their meaning in this manner: —

"The warm sunbeam was the Egyptian Princess; she descended to the Marsh-king, and from their meeting sprang a flower" —

"I cannot exactly repeat the words," said the Stork-father, who had been listening to the discussion from the roof, and was now telling in his nest what he had heard. "What they said was not easy of comprehension, but it was so exceedingly wise that they were immediately rewarded with rank and marks of distinction. Even the Prince's head cook got a handsome present — that was, doubtless, for having prepared the repast."

"And what didst thou get?" asked the Stork-mother. "They had no right to overlook the most important actor in the affair, and that was thyself. The learned only babbled about the matter. But so it is always."

Late at night, when the now happy household reposed in peaceful slumbers, there was one who was still awake; and that was not the Stork-father, although he was standing upon his nest on one leg, and dozing like a sentry. No; little Helga was awake, leaning over the balcony, and gazing through the clear air at the large blazing stars, larger and brighter than she had ever seen them in the north, and yet the same. She was thinking upon the Viking's wife near "the wild morass;" upon her foster-mother's mild eyes; upon the tears she had shed over the poor frog-child, who was now standing under the light of the glorious stars, on the banks of the Nile, in the soft spring air. She thought of the love in the heathen woman's breast — the love she had shown towards an unfortunate being, who, in human form, was as vicious as a wild beast, and in the form of a noxious animal was horrible to look upon or to touch. She gazed at the glittering stars, and thought of the shining circle on the brow of the dead Priest, when they flew over the forest and the morass. Tones seemed again to sound on her ears — words she had heard spoken when they rode together, and she sat like an evil spirit there — words about the great Source of love, the highest love, that which included all races and all generations. Yes, what was not bestowed, won, obtained? Helga's thoughts embraced by day, by night, the whole of her good fortune; she stood contemplating it like a child who turns precipitately from the giver to the beautiful gifts; she passed on to the increasing happiness which might come, and would

come. Higher and higher rose her thoughts, till she so lost herself in the dreams of future bliss that she forgot the Giver of all good. It was the superabundance of youthful spirits which caused her imagination to take so bold a flight. Her eyes were flashing with her thoughts, when suddenly a loud noise in the court beneath recalled her to mundane objects. She saw there two enormous ostriches running angrily round in a narrow circle. She had never before seen these large, heavy birds, who looked as if their wings were clipped; and when she asked what had happened to them, she heard for the first time the Egyptian legend about the ostrich.

Its race had once been beautiful, its wings broad and strong. Then one evening the largest forest birds said to it, "Brother, shall we fly to-morrow, God willing, to the river and drink?" And the Ostrich answered, "Yes, I will." At dawn they flew away, first up toward the sun, higher and higher, the Ostrich far before the others. It flew on in its pride up toward the light; it relied upon its own strength, not upon the Giver of that strength; it did not say, "God willing." Then the avenging angel drew aside the veil from the streaming flames, and in that moment the bird's wings were burnt, and he sank in wretchedness to the earth. Neither he nor his species were ever afterwards able to raise themselves up in the air. They fly timidly — hurry along in a narrow space; they are a warning to mankind in all our thoughts and all our enterprises to say, "God willing."

And Helga humbly bowed her head, looked at the ostriches rushing past, saw their surprise and their simple joy at the sight of their own large shadows on the white wall, and more serious thoughts took possession of her mind, adding to her present happiness — inspiring brighter hopes for the future. What was yet to happen? The best for her, "God willing."

In the early spring, when the storks were about to go north again, Helga took from her arm a golden bracelet, scratched her name upon it, beckoned to the Stork-father, hung the gold band round his neck, and bade him carry it to the Viking's wife, who would thereby know that her adopted daughter lived, was happy, and remembered her.

"It is heavy to carry," thought the Stork, when it was hung round his neck; "but gold and honor must not be flung away upon the high road. The stork brings luck — they must admit that up yonder."

"Thou layest gold, and I lay eggs," said the Stork-mother; "but thou layest only once, and I lay every year. But neither of us gets any thanks, which is very vexatious."

"One knows, however, that one has done one's duty," said the Stork-father.

"But that can't be hung up to be seen and lauded; and if it could be, fine words butter no parsnips."

So they flew away.

The little nightingale that sang upon the tamarind-tree would also soon be going north, up yonder near "the wild morass." Helga had often heard it — she would send a message by it; for, since she had flown in the magical disguise of the swan, she had often spoken to the storks and the swallows. The nightingale would therefore understand her, and she prayed it to fly to the beech-wood upon the Jutland peninsula, where the tomb of stone and branches had been erected. She asked it to beg all the little birds to protect the sacred spot, and frequently to sing over it.

And the nightingale flew away, and time flew also.

And the eagle stood upon a pyramid, and looked in the autumn on a stately procession with richly laden camels, with armed and splendidly equipped men on snorting Arabian horses shining white like silver, with red trembling nostrils, with long thick manes hanging down to their slender legs. Rich guests — a royal Arabian Prince, handsome as a prince should be — approached the gorgeous palace where the storks' nests stood empty. Those who dwelt in these nests were away in the far north, but they were soon to return; and they arrived on the very day that was most marked by joy and festivities. It was a wedding feast; and the beautiful Helga, clad in silk and jewels, was the bride. The bridegroom was the young Prince from Arabia. They sat at the upper end of the table, between her mother and grandfather.

But she looked not at the bridegroom's bronzed and manly

cheek, where the dark beard curled. She looked not at his black eyes, so full of fire, that were fastened upon her. She gazed outwards upon the bright, twinkling stars that glittered in the heavens.

Then a loud rustling of strong wings was heard in the air. The storks had come back; and the old pair, fatigued as they were after their journey, and much in need of rest, flew immediately down to the rails of the veranda, for they knew what festival was going on. They had heard already at the frontiers that Helga had them painted upon the wall, introducing them into her own history.

"It was a kind thought of hers," said the Stork-father.

"It is very little," said the Stork-mother. "She could hardly have done less."

And when Helga saw them she rose, and went out into the veranda to stroke their backs. The old couple bowed their necks, and the youngest little ones felt themselves much honored by being so well received.

And Helga looked up towards the shining stars, that glittered more and more brilliantly; and between them and her she beheld in the air a transparent form. It floated nearer to her. It was the dead Christian priest, who had also come to her bridal solemnity — come from the kingdom of heaven.

"The glory and beauty up yonder far exceed all that is known on earth," he said.

And Helga pleaded softly, earnestly, that but for one moment she might be allowed to ascend up thither, and to cast one single glance on those heavenly scenes.

Then he raised her amidst splendor and magnificence, and a stream of delicious music. It was not around her only that all seemed to be brightness and music, but the light seemed to stream in her soul, and the sweet tones to be echoed there. Words cannot describe what she felt.

"We must now return," he said; "thou wilt be missed."

"Only one more glance!" she entreated. "Only one short minute!"

"We must return to earth — the guests are all departing."

"But one more glance — the last!"

And Helga stood again in the veranda, but all the torches

outside were extinguished; all the light in the bridal saloon was gone; the Storks were gone; no guests were to be seen — no bridegroom. All had vanished in these three short minutes.

Then Helga felt anxious. She wandered through the vast empty halls — there slept foreign soldiers. She opened the side door which led to her own chambers, and, as she fancied she was entering them, she found herself in the garden: it had not stood there. Red streaks crossed the skies; it was the dawn of day.

Only three minutes in heaven, and a whole night on earth had passed away.

Then she perceived the Storks. She called to them, spoke their language, and the old Stork turned his head toward her, and listened, and drew near.

"Thou dost speak our language," said he. "What wouldst thou? Whence comest thou, thou foreign maiden?"

"It is I — it is Helga! Dost thou not know me? Three minutes ago we were talking together in the veranda."

"That is a mistake," said the Stork. "Thou must have dreamt this."

"No, no," she said, and reminded him of the Viking's castle, "the wild morass," the journey thence.

Then the old Stork winked with his eyes.

"That is a very old story; I have heard it from my great-great-grandmother's time. Yes, truly, there was once in Egypt a Princess from the Danish land; but she disappeared on the evening of her wedding, many hundred years ago, and was never seen again. Thou canst read that thyself upon the monument in the garden, upon which are sculptured both swans and storks, and above it stands one like thyself in the white marble."

And so it was. Helga saw, comprehended it all, and sank on her knees.

The sun burst forth in all its morning splendor, and as, in former days, with its first rays fell the frog disguise, and the lovely form became visible: so now, in the baptism of light, arose a form of celestial beauty, purer than the air. as if in a

veil of radiance to the Father above. The body sank into dust, and where she had stood lay a faded lotus flower!

"Well, this is a new ending to the story," said the Stork-father, "which I by no means expected; but I am pleased with it."

"What will the young ones say to it?" wondered the Stork-mother.

"Ah! that, indeed, is of the most consequence," said the Stork-father.

OLE SHUT-EYE.

IN the whole world there is nobody who knows so many stories as Ole Shut-Eye ; he can tell capital ones !

As evening comes on, when the children still sit nicely at table or on their stools, then comes Ole Shut-Eye. He comes up the stairs quite softly, for he walks in his stocking feet ; he opens the door noiselessly, and st ! he syringes sweet milk in the children's eyes, a small, small stream, but enough to prevent them from keeping their eyes open ; and thus they cannot see him. He creeps just among them, and blows softly upon their necks, and this makes their heads heavy. O yes, but it doesn't hurt them, for Ole Shut-Eye is very fond of the children ; he only wants them to be quiet, and that they are not until they are taken to bed : they are to be quiet that he may tell them stories.

When the children sleep, Ole Shut-Eye sits down upon their bed. He is well dressed : his coat is of silk, but it is impossible to say of what color, for it shines red, green, and blue, according as he turns. Under each arm he carries an umbrella : the one with pictures on it he spreads over the good children, and then they dream all night the most glorious stories ; but on his other umbrella nothing at all is painted,

and this he spreads over the naughty children, and these sleep in a dull way, and when they awake in the morning they have not dreamed of anything.

Now we shall hear how Ole Shut-Eye, every evening through one whole week, came to a little boy named Hjalmar, and what he told him. There are seven stories, for there are seven days in the week.

MONDAY.

"Listen," said Ole Shut-Eye in the evening, when he had put Hjalmar to bed; "now I'll clear up."

And all the flowers in the flower-pots became great trees, stretching out their long branches under the ceiling of the room and along the walls, so that the whole room looked like a beauteous bower; and all the twigs were covered with flowers, and each flower was more beautiful than a rose, and smelt so sweet that one wanted to eat it; it was sweeter than jam. The fruit gleamed like gold, and there were cakes bursting with raisins. It was splendid. But at the same time a terrible wail sounded from the table-drawer, where Hjalmar's school-book lay.

"Whatever can that be?" said Ole Shut-Eye; and he went to the table, and opened the drawer. It was the slate which

was suffering from convulsions, for a wrong number had got into the sum, so that it was nearly falling in pieces; the slate pencil tugged and jumped at its string, as if it had been a little dog who wanted to help the sum; but he could not. And thus there was a great lamentation in Hjalmar's copy-book; it was quite terrible to hear. On each page the great letters stood in a row, one underneath the other, and each with a little one at its side; that was the copy; and next to these were a few more letters which thought they looked just like the first; and these Hjalmar had written; but they lay down just as if they had tumbled over the pencil lines on which they were to stand.

"See, this is how you should hold yourselves," said the Copy. "Look, sloping in this way, with a powerful swing!"

"O, we should be very glad to do that," replied Hjalmar's Letters, "but we cannot; we are too weakly."

"Then you must take medicine," said Ole Shut-Eye.

"O no," cried they; and they immediately stood up so gracefully that it was beautiful to behold.

"Yes, now we cannot tell any stories," said Ole Shut-Eye; "now I must exercise them. One, two! one, two!" and thus he exercised the Letters; and they stood quite slender, and as beautiful as any copy can be. But when Ole Shut-Eye went away, and Hjalmar looked at them next morning, they were as weak and miserable as ever.

TUESDAY.

As soon as Hjalmar was in bed, Ole Shut-Eye touched all the furniture in the room with his little magic syringe, and they immediately began to talk together, and each one spoke of itself, with the exception of the Spittoon, which stood silent, and was vexed that they should be so vain as to speak only of themselves, and think only of themselves, without any regard for him who stood so modestly in the corner for every one's use.

Over the chest of drawers hung a great picture in a gilt frame — it was a landscape. One saw therein large old trees, flowers in the grass, and a broad river which flowed round about a forest, past many castles, and far out into the wide ocean.

Ole Shut-Eye touched the painting with his magic syringe, and the birds began to sing, the branches of the trees stirred, and the clouds began to move across it; one could see their shadows glide over the landscape.

Now Ole Shut-Eye lifted little Hjalmar up to the frame, and put the boy's feet into the picture, just in the high grass; and there he stood · and the sun shone upon him through the branches of the trees. He ran to the water, and seated himself in a little boat which lay there; it was painted red and white, the sails gleamed like silver, and six swans, each with a gold circlet round its neck, and a bright blue star on its

forehead, drew the boat past the great wood, where the trees tell of robbers and witches, and the flowers tell of the graceful little elves, and of what the butterflies have told them.

Gorgeous fishes, with scales like silver and gold, swam after their boat; sometimes they gave a spring, so that it splashed in the water; and birds, blue and red, little and great, flew after them in two long rows; the gnats danced, and the cockchafers said, "Boom! boom!" They all wanted to follow Hjalmar, and each one had a story to tell.

That was a pleasure voyage. Sometimes the forest was thick and dark, sometimes like a glorious garden full of sunlight and flowers; and there were great palaces of glass and of marble; on the balconies stood princesses, and these were all little girls whom Hjalmar knew well; he had already played with them. Each one stretched forth her hand, and held out the prettiest sugar heart which ever a cake-woman could sell; and Hjalmar took hold of each sugar heart as he passed by, and the Princess held fast, so that each of them got a piece — she the smaller share, and Hjalmar the larger. At each palace little princes stood sentry. They shouldered golden swords, and caused raisins and tin soldiers to shower down: one could see that they were real princes. Sometimes Hjalmar sailed through forests, sometimes through great halls, or through the midst of a town. He also came to the town where his nurse lived, who had carried him in her arms when he was quite a little boy, and who had always been so kind to him; and she nodded and beckoned, and sang the pretty verse she had made herself and had sent to Hjalmar: —

I think of you, so oft, so oft,
My own Hjalmar, ever dear;
I've kissed your little lips so soft,
Your forehead and your cheeks so clear.
I heard you utter your first word,
Then was I forced to say farewell;
Now will I trust you to our Lord,
A good boy here, an angel there to dwell.

And all the birds sang too, the flowers danced on their stalks, and the old trees nodded, just as if Ole Shut-Eye had been telling stories to *them*.

WEDNESDAY.

How the rain was streaming down without! Hjalmar could hear it in his sleep; and when Ole Shut-Eye opened a window, the water stood quite up to the window-sill: there was quite a lake outside, and a noble ship lay close by the house.

"If thou wilt sail with me, little Hjalmar," said Ole Shut-Eye, "thou canst voyage to-night to foreign climes, and be back again to-morrow."

And Hjalmar suddenly stood in his Sunday clothes upon the glorious ship, and immediately the weather became fine, and they sailed through the streets and steered round by the church; and now everything was one great wild ocean. They sailed on until land was no longer to be seen, and they saw a number of storks, who also came from their home, and were travelling towards the hot countries: these storks flew in a row, one behind the other, and they had already flown far - far! One of them was so weary that his wings would scarce carry him farther: he was the very last in the row, and soon remained a great way behind the rest; at last he sank, with outspread wings, deeper and deeper; he gave a few more strokes with his pinions, but it was of no use; now he touched the rigging of the ship with his feet, then he glided down from the sail, and — bump! — he stood upon the deck.

Now the cabin boy took him and put him into the hen-coop

with the Fowls, Ducks, and the Turkeys; and the poor Stork stood among them quite embarrassed.

"Just look at the fellow!" said all the Fowls.

And the Turkey-cock swelled himself up as much as ever he could, and asked the Stork who he was; and the Ducks walked backward and quacked to each other, "Quackery! quackery!"

And the Stork told them of hot Africa, of the pyramids, and of the ostrich, which runs like a wild horse through the desert; but the Ducks did not understand what he said, and they said to one another, —

"We're all of the same opinion, namely, that he's stupid."

"Yes, certainly he's stupid," said the Turkey-cock; and he gobbled.

Then the Stork was quite silent, and thought of his Africa.

"Those are wonderful thin legs of yours," said the Turkey-cock. "Pray, how much do they cost a yard?"

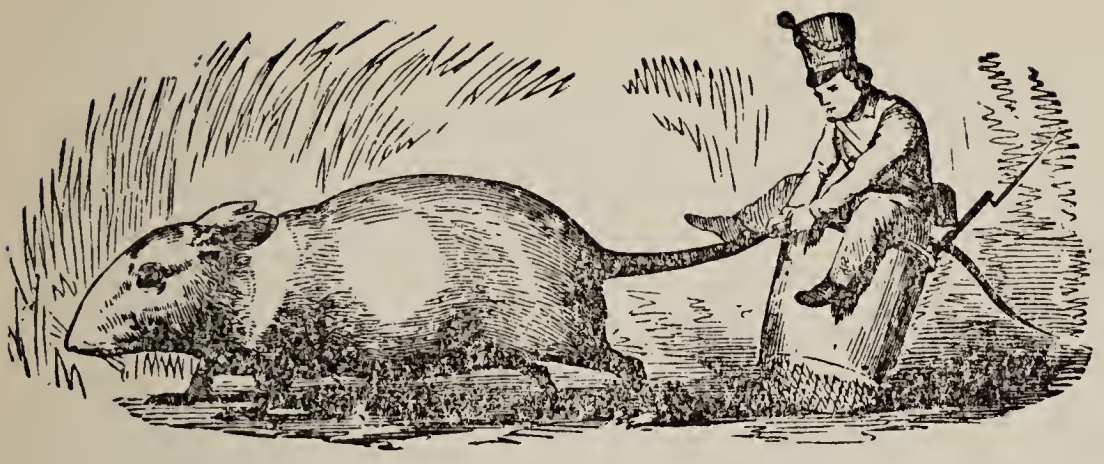
"Quack! quack! quack!" grinned all the Ducks; but the Stork pretended not to hear it at all.

"You may just as well laugh too," said the Turkey-cock to him, "for that was very wittily said. Or was it, perhaps, too high for you? Yes, yes, he isn't very penetrating. Let us continue to be interesting among ourselves."

And then he gobbled, and the Ducks quacked, "Gick! gack! gick! gack!" It was terrible how they made fun among themselves.

But Hjalmar went to the hen-coop, opened the back door, and called to the Stork; and the Stork hopped out to him on to the deck. Now he had rested, and it seemed as if he nodded to Hjalmar, to thank him; then he spread his wings, and flew away to the warm countries; but the Fowls clucked, and the Ducks quacked, and the Turkey-cock became fiery red in the face.

"To-morrow we shall make songs of you," said Hjalmar; and so saying he awoke, and was lying in his linen bed. It was a wonderful journey that Ole Shut-Eye had caused him to take that night.



THURSDAY.

"I tell you what," said Ole Shut-Eye, "you must not be frightened. Here you shall see a little Mouse," and he held out his hand with the pretty little creature in it. "It has come to invite you to a wedding. There are two little Mice here who are going to enter into the marriage state to-night. They live under the floor of your mother's store-closet: that is said to be a charming dwelling-place!"

"But how can I get through the little mouse-hole in the floor?" asked Hjalmar.

"Let me manage that," said Ole Shut-Eye. "I will make you small."

And he touched Hjalmar with his magic syringe, and the boy began to shrink and shrink, until he was not so long as a finger.

"Now you may borrow the uniform of a tin soldier: I think it would fit you, and it looks well to wear a uniform when one is in society."

"Yes, certainly," said Hjalmar.

And in a moment he was dressed like the spiciest of tin soldiers.

"Will your honor not be kind enough to take a seat in your mamma's thimble?" asked the Mouse. "Then I shall have the honor of drawing you."

"Will the young lady really take so much trouble?" cried Hjalmar.

And thus they drove to the Mouse's wedding. First they

came into a long passage beneath the boards, which was only just so high that they could drive through it in the thimble; and the whole passage was lit up with rotten wood.

"Is there not a delicious smell here?" observed the Mouse. "The entire road has been greased with bacon rinds, and there can be nothing more exquisite."

Now they came into the festive hall. On the right hand stood all the little lady mice; and they whispered and giggled as if they were making fun of each other; on the left stood all the gentlemen mice, stroking their whiskers with their fore paws; and in the centre of the hall the bridegroom and bride might be seen standing in a hollow cheese rind, and kissing each other terribly before all the guests; for this was the betrothal, and the marriage was to follow immediately.

More and more strangers kept flocking in. One mouse nearly trod another to death; and the happy couple had stationed themselves just in the doorway, so that one could neither come in nor go out. Like the passage, the room had been greased with bacon rinds, and that was the entire banquet; but for the dessert a pea was produced, in which a mouse belonging to the family had bitten the name of the betrothed pair — that is to say, the first letter of the name: that was something quite out of the common way.

All the mice said it was a beautiful wedding, and that the entertainment had been very agreeable. And then Hjalmar drove home again: he had really been in grand company; but he had been obliged to crawl, to make himself little, and to put on a tin soldier's uniform.

FRIDAY.

"It is wonderful how many grown-up people there are who would be glad to have me!" said Ole Shut-Eye; "especially those who have done something wrong. 'Good little Ole,' they say to me, 'we cannot close our eyes, and so we lie all night and see our evil deeds, which sit on the bedstead like ugly little goblins, and throw hot water over us; will you not come and drive them away, so that we may have a good sleep?' and then they sigh deeply, — 'We would really be glad to pay for it. Good-night, Ole: the money lies on the window-sill.' But I do nothing for money," said Ole Shut-Eye.

"What shall we do this evening?" asked Hjalmar.

"I don't know if you care to go to another wedding to-night. It is of a different kind from that of yesterday. Your sister's great doll, that looks like a man, and is called Hermann, is going to marry the doll Bertha. Moreover, it is the dolls' birthday, and therefore they will receive very many presents."

"Yes, I know that," replied Hjalmar. "Whenever the dolls want new clothes, my sister lets them either keep their birthday or celebrate a wedding; that has certainly happened a hundred times already."

"Yes, but to-night is the hundred and first wedding; and when number one hundred and one is past, it is all over; and that is why it will be so splendid. Only look!"

And Hjalmar looked at the table. There stood the little cardboard house with the windows illuminated, and in front of it all the tin soldiers were presenting arms. The bride and bridegroom sat quite thoughtful, and with good reason, on the floor, leaning against a leg of the table. And Ole Shut-Eye, dressed up in the grandmother's black gown, married them to each other. When the ceremony was over, all the pieces of furniture struck up the following beautiful song, which the Pencil had written for them. It was sung to the melody of the soldiers' tattoo: —

"Let the song swell like the rushing wind,
In honor of those who this day are joined,
Although they stand here stiff and blind,
Because they are both of a leathery kind.
Hurrah! hurrah! though they're deaf and blind,
Let the song swell like the rushing wind."

And now they received presents — but they had declined to accept provisions of any kind, for they intended to live on love.

"Shall we now go into a summer lodging, or start on a journey?" asked the bridegroom.

And the Swallow, who was a great traveller, and the old yard Hen, who had brought up five broods of chickens, were consulted on the subject. And the Swallow told of the beautiful warm climes, where the grapes hung in ripe, heavy clusters, where the air is mild, and the mountains glow with colors unknown here.

"But you have not our brown cole there!" objected the Hen. "I was once in the country, with my children, in one summer that lasted five weeks. There was a sand-pit, in which we could walk about and scratch; and we had the *entrée* to a garden where brown cole grew: it was so hot there that one could scarcely breathe; and then we have not all the poisonous animals that infest these warm countries of yours, and we are free from robbers. He is a villain who does not consider our country the most beautiful — he certainly does

not deserve to be here!" And then the Hen wept, and went on: "I have also travelled. I rode in a coop above twelve miles; and there is no pleasure at all in travelling!"

"Yes, the Hen is a sensible woman!" said the doll Bertha. "I don't think anything of travelling among mountains, for you only have to go up, and then down again. No, we will go into the sand-pit beyond the gate, and walk about in the cabbage garden."

And so it was settled.

SATURDAY.

"Am I to hear some stories now?" asked little Hjalmar, as soon as Ole Shut-Eye had sent him to sleep.

"This evening we have no time for that," replied Ole Shut-Eye; and he spread his finest umbrella over the lad. "Only look at these Chinamen!"

And the whole umbrella looked like a great china dish with blue trees and pointed bridges, with little Chinamen upon them, who stood there nodding their heads.

"We must have the whole world prettily decked out for to-morrow morning," said Ole Shut-Eye, "for that will be a holiday — it will be Sunday. I will go to the church steeples to see that the little church goblins are polishing the bells,

that they may sound sweetly. I will go out into the field, and see if the breezes are blowing the dust from the grass and leaves; and, what is the greatest work of all, I will bring down all the stars, to polish them. I take them in my apron; but first each one must be numbered, and the holes in which they are placed up there must be numbered likewise, so that they may be placed in the same grooves again; otherwise they would not sit fast, and we should have too many shooting stars, for one after another would fall down."

"Hark ye! Do you know, Mr. Ole Shut-Eye," said an old Portrait which hung on the wall where Hjalmar slept, "I am Hjalmar's great-grandfather? I thank you for telling the boy stories; but you must not confuse his ideas. The stars cannot come down and be polished! The stars are world-orbs, just like our own earth, and that is just the good thing about them."

"I thank you, old great-grandfather," said Ole Shut-Eye, "I thank you! You are the head of the family. You are the ancestral head; but I am older than you! I am an old heathen: the Romans and Greeks called me the Dream God! I have been in the noblest houses, and am admitted there still! I know how to act with great people and with small! Now you may tell your own story!" and Ole Shut-Eye took his umbrella, and went away.

"Well, well! May one not even give an opinion nowadays?" grumbled the old Portrait. And Hjalmar awoke.

SUNDAY.

"Good evening!" said Ole Shut-Eye; and Hjalmar nodded, and then ran and turned his great-grandfather's Portrait against the wall, that it might not interrupt them, as it had done yesterday.

"Now you must tell me stories; about the five green peas that lived in one shell, and about the cock's foot that paid court to the hen's foot, and of the darning-needle who gave herself such airs because she thought herself a working needle."

"There may be too much of a good thing!" said Ole Shut-Eye. "You know that I prefer showing you something. I will show you my own brother. His name, like mine, is Ole Shut-Eye, but he never comes to any one more than once; and he takes him to whom he comes upon his horse, and tells him stories. He only knows two. One of these is so exceedingly beautiful that no one in the world can imagine it, and the other so horrible that it cannot be described."

And then Ole Shut-Eye lifted little Hjalmar up to the window, and said, —

"There you will see my brother, the other Ole Shut-Eye. They also call him Death! Do you see, he does not look so terrible as they make him in the picture-books, where he is only a skeleton. No, that is silver embroidery that he has

on his coat; that is a splendid hussar's uniform; a mantle of black velvet flies behind him over the horse. See how he gallops along!"

And Hjalmar saw how this Ole Shut-eye rode away, and took young people as well as old upon his horse. Some of them he put before him, and some behind: but he always asked first, "How stands it with the mark-book?" "Well," they all replied. "Yes, let me see it myself," he said. And then each one had to show him the book; and those who had "very well" and "remarkably well" written in their books, were placed in front of his horse, and a lovely story was told to them; while those who had "middling" or "tolerably well," had to sit up behind, and hear a very terrible story indeed. They trembled and wept, and wanted to jump off the horse, but this they could not do, for they had all, as it were, grown fast to it.

"But Death is a most splendid Ole Shut-Eye," said Hjalmar. "I am not afraid of him!"

"Nor need you be," replied Ole Shut-Eye; "but see that you have a good mark-book!"

"Yes, that is improving!" muttered the great-grandfather's Picture. "It is of some use giving one's opinion." And now he was satisfied.

You see, that is the story of Ole Shut-Eye; and now he may tell you more himself, this evening!

THE BELL'S HOLLOW.

"DING-DONG! ding-dong!" sounded from the buried Bell in Odensee River. What sort of a river is that? Every child in the town of Odensee knows it. It flows round the foot of the gardens, from the locks to the water-mill, away under the wooden bridges. In the river grow yellow water-lilies, brown, feather-like reeds, and the soft, velvet-like bulrushes, so high and so large. Old, split willow-trees, bent and twisted, hang far over the water by the side of the monks' meadows and the bleaching greens; but a little above is garden after garden — the one very different from the other: some with beautiful flowers and arbors, clean and in prim array, like dolls' villages; some only filled with cabbages; while in others there are no attempts at a garden to be seen at all, only great elder-trees stretching themselves out, and hanging over the running water, which here and there is deeper than an oar can fathom.

Opposite to the nunnery is the deepest part. It is called "The Bell's Hollow," and there dwells the Merman. He sleeps by day when the sun shines through the water, but comes forth on the clear, starry nights, and by moonlight. He is very old. Grandmothers have heard of him from their grandmothers. They said he lived a lonely life, and had scarcely any one to speak to except the large old church-bell. Once upon a time it hung up in the steeple of the church; but now there is no trace either of the steeple or of the church, which was then called Saint Albani.

"Ding-dong! ding-dong!" rang the Bell while it stood in the steeple; and one evening, when the sun was setting, and the Bell was in full motion, it broke loose, and flew through the air, its shining metal glowing in the red sunbeams. "Ding-dong! ding-dong! now I am going to rest," sang the Bell; and it flew out to Odensee River, where it was deepest, and therefore that spot is now called "The Bell's Hollow." But it found neither sleep nor rest there. Down at the Merman's it still rings; so that at times it is heard above, through the water, and many people say that its tones foretell a death;

but there is no truth in that, for it rings to amuse the Merman, who is now no longer alone.

And what does the Bell relate? It was so very old, it was there before our grandmothers' grandmothers were born, and yet it was a child compared with the Merman, who is an old, quiet, strange-looking person, with eel-skin leggings, a scaly tunic adorned with yellow water-lilies, a wreath of sedges in his hair, and weeds in his beard. It must be confessed he was not very handsome to look at.

It would take a year and a day to repeat all that the Bell said, for it told the same old stories over and over again very minutely, making them sometimes longer, sometimes shorter, according to its mood. It told of the olden days — the rigorous, dark times.

To the tower upon St. Albani Church, where the Bell hung, ascended a monk. He was both young and handsome, but had an air of deep melancholy. He looked through an aperture out over the Odensee River. Its bed then was broad, and the monks' meadows were a lake. He gazed over them, and over the green mound called "The Nun's Hill," beyond which the cloister lay, where the light shone from a nun's cell. He had known her well, and he remembered the past, and his heart beat wildly at the recollection.

"Ding-dong! ding-dong!" This was one of the Bell's stories: —

"There came up to the tower, one day, an idiot servant of the Bishop; and when I, the Bell, who am cast in hard and heavy metal, swung about and pealed, I could have broken his head, for he seated himself immediately under me, and began to play with two sticks, exactly as if it had been a stringed instrument, and he sang to it thus: 'Now I may venture to sing aloud what elsewhere I dare not whisper — sing of all that is kept hidden behind locks and bolts. Yonder it is cold and damp. The rats eat the living bodies. No one knows of it; no one hears of it — not even now, when the Bell is pouring forth its loudest peal — ding-dong! ding-dong!'

"There was a king: he was called Knud. He humbled himself both before bishops and monks; but as he unjustly oppressed the people, and laid heavy taxes on them, they

armed themselves with all sorts of weapons, and chased him away as if he had been a wild beast. He sought shelter in the church, and had the doors and windows closed. The furious multitude surrounded the sacred edifice, as I heard related; the crows and the ravens, and the jackdaws to boot, became scared by the noise and the tumult; they flew up into the tower, and out again; they looked on the multitude below, they looked also in at the church windows, and shrieked out what they saw.

"King Knud knelt before the altar and prayed; his brothers Erik and Benedict stood guarding him with their drawn swords; but the King's servitor, the false Blaké, betrayed his lord. They knew outside where he could be reached. A stone was cast in through the window at him, and the King lay dead. There were shouts and cries among the angry crowd, and cries among the flocks of frightened birds; and I joined them, too. I pealed forth, 'Ding-dong! ding-dong!'

"The Church-bell hangs high, sees far around, receives visits from birds, and understands their language. To it whispers the Wind through the wickets and apertures, and through every little chink; and the Wind knows everything. He hears it from the Air, for *it* encompasses all living things; it even enters into the lungs of human beings; it hears every word and every sigh. The Air knows all, the Wind repeats all, and the Bell understands their speech, and rings it forth to the whole world — 'Ding-dong! ding-dong!'

"But all this was too much for me to hear and to know. I had not strength enough to ring it all out. I became so wearied, so heavy, that the beam from which I hung broke, and I flew through the luminous air down to where the river is deepest, where the Merman dwells alone in solitude; and here I am, year after year, relating to him what I have seen and what I have heard. 'Ding-dong! ding-dong!'"

Thus rang the chimes from "The Bell's Hollow" in the Odensee River, as my grandmother declares.

But our schoolmaster says there is no Bell ringing down there, for it could not be; and there is no Merman down there, for there are no mermen; and, when all the church-bells are ringing loudly, he says that it is not the bells, but

the air, that makes the sound. My grandmother told me that the Bell also said this; so, since the schoolmaster and the Bell agree in this, no doubt it is true.

The air knows everything. It is round us, it is in us; it speaks of our thoughts and our actions; and it proclaims them farther than did the Bell now down in the Hollow in Odensee River, where the Merman dwells — it proclaims all out into the great vault of heaven, far, far away, even into eternity, up to where heaven's bells ring "Ding-dong! ding-dong!"

THUMBLING.

THERE was once a woman who wished for a very little child, but she did not know where she should get one. So she went to an old witch and said, —

"I do so very much wish for a little child; can you not tell me where I can get one?"

"O, that's easily managed," said the Witch. "Here is a barleycorn; it is not of the kind which grows in the countryman's field, and which the chickens get to eat. Put that into a flower-pot, and you shall see what you shall see."

"Thank you," said the Woman; and she gave the Witch twelve skillings, went home and planted the barleycorn, and immediately there grew up a great handsome flower, which looked like a tulip; but the leaves were tightly closed, as though it were still a bud.

"That is a beautiful flower," said the Woman; and she kissed its yellow and red leaves; and as she kissed it the flower gave a loud snap! and opened. It was a real tulip, as one could now see; but in the middle of the flower there sat upon the green velvet stamens a little maiden, delicate and graceful to behold. She was scarcely half a thumb's length in height, and therefore she was called Thumbling.

A neat polished walnut-shell served Thumbling for a cradle, blue violet-leaves were her mattresses, with a rose-leaf for a coverlet. There she slept at night; but in the day-time she played upon the table, where the woman had put a plate with a wreath of flowers around it, whose stalks stood in water; on the water swam a great tulip-leaf, and on this the little maiden could sit, and row from one side of the plate to the other, with two white horse-hairs for oars. That looked pretty indeed! She could also sing, and, indeed, so delicately and sweetly, that the like had never been heard.

Once, as she lay at night in her pretty bed, there came an old Toad creeping through the window, in which one pane was broken. The Toad was very ugly, big, and damp: it hopped straight down upon the table, where Thumbling lay sleeping under the rose-leaf.

"That would be a handsome wife for my son," said the Toad; and she took up the walnut-shell in which Thumbling lay asleep, and hopped with it through the window down into the garden.

There ran a great broad brook; but the margin was swampy and soft, and here the Toad dwelt with her son. Ugh! he was ugly, and looked as old as his mother. "Croak! croak! brek-kek-kex!" that was all he could say when he saw the graceful little maiden in the walnut-shell.

"Don't speak so loud, or she will awake," said the old Toad. "She might run away from us, for she is as light as a bit of swan's-down. We will put her out in the brook upon one of the broad water-lily leaves. That will be just like an island for her, she is so small and light. Then she can't get away, while we put the state room under the marsh in order, where you are to live and keep house together."

Out in the brook there grew many water-lilies with broad green leaves, which looked as if they were floating on the water. The leaf which lay farthest out was also the greatest of all, and to that the old Toad swam out and laid the walnut-shell upon it with Thumbling. The poor little unfortunate woke early in the morning, and when she saw where she was, she began to cry very bitterly; for there was water on every side of the great green leaf, and she could not get to land at

all. The old Toad sat down in the marsh, decking out her room with rushes and yellow weed — it was to be made very pretty for the new daughter-in-law; then she swam out with her ugly son, to the leaf on which Thumbling was. They wanted to take her pretty bed, which was to be put in the bridal chamber before she went in there herself. The old Toad bowed low before her, and said, "Here is my son; he will be your husband, and you will live splendidly together in the marsh."

"Croak! croak! brek-kek-kex!" that was all the son could say.

They took the delicate little bed, and swam away with it; but Thumbling sat all alone upon the green leaf and wept, for she did not like to live at the nasty Toad's, and have her ugly son for a husband. The little fishes swimming in the water below had both seen the Toad, and had also heard what she said; therefore they stretched forth their heads, for they wanted to see the little girl. So soon as they saw her, they thought her so pretty that they felt very sorry she should have to go down to the ugly Toad. No, that must never be! They got together in the water around the green stalk which held the leaf upon which the little maiden stood, and with their teeth they gnawed away the stalk, and so the leaf swam down the stream; and away went Thumbling, far away, where the Toad could not get at her.

Thumbling sailed past many cities, and the little birds which sat in the bushes saw her, and said, "What a lovely little girl!" The leaf swam away with them, farther and farther; so Thumbling travelled out of the country.

A graceful little white Butterfly always fluttered round her, and at last alighted upon the leaf. Thumbling pleased him, and she was very glad of this, for now the Toad could not reach them; and it was so beautiful where she was floating along — the sun shone upon the water, and the water glistened like the most splendid gold. She took her girdle and bound one end of it round the butterfly, fastening the other end of the ribbon to the leaf. The leaf now glided on much faster, and Thumbling, too, for she stood upon the leaf.

There came a big May-bug flying up; and he saw her, and

immediately clasped his claws round her slender waist, and flew with her into a tree. The green leaf was swimming down the brook, and the Butterfly with it; for he was fastened to the leaf, and could not get away from it.

Mercy! how frightened poor little Thumbling was when the May-bug flew with her up into the tree! But especially she was sorry for the fine white Butterfly whom she had bound fast to the leaf, for, if he could not free himself from it, he would be obliged to starve. The May-bug, however, did not trouble himself at all about this. He seated himself with her upon the biggest green leaf of the tree, gave her the sweet part of the flowers to eat, and declared that she was very pretty, though she did not in the least resemble a may-bug. Afterwards came all the other may-bugs who lived in the tree to pay a visit; they looked at Thumbling, and said, —

"Why, she has not even more than two legs! that has a wretched appearance."

"She has not any feelers!" cried another.

"Her waist is quite slender — fie! she looks like a human creature — how ugly she is!" said all the lady may-bugs.

And yet Thumbling was very pretty. Even the May-bug who had carried her off saw that; but when all the others declared she was ugly, he believed it at last, and would not have her at all — she might go whither she liked. Then they flew down with her from the tree, and set her upon a daisy, and she wept, because she was so ugly that the may-bugs would have nothing to say to her; and yet she was the loveliest little being one could imagine, and as tender and delicate as a rose-leaf.

The whole summer through poor Thumbling lived quite alone in the great wood. She wove herself a bed out of blades of grass, and hung it up under a shamrock, so that she was protected from the rain; she plucked the honey out of the flowers for food, and drank of the dew which stood every morning upon the leaves. Thus summer and autumn passed away; but now came winter, the cold, long winter. All the birds who had sung so sweetly before her flew away; trees and flowers shed their leaves; the great shamrock under which she had lived shriveled up, and there remained nothing

of it but a yellow, withered stalk; and she was dreadfully cold, for her clothes were torn, and she herself was so frail and delicate — poor little Thumbling! she was nearly frozen. It began to snow, and every snow-flake that fell upon her was like a whole shovelful thrown upon one of us, for we are tall, and she was only an inch long. Then she wrapped herself in a dry leaf, and that tore in the middle, and would not warm her — she shivered with cold.

Close to the wood into which she had now come lay a great corn-field, but the corn was gone long ago; only the naked, dry stubble stood up out of the frozen ground. These were just like a great forest for her to wander through; and O! how she trembled with cold. Then she arrived at the door of the Field-mouse. This mouse had a little hole under the stubble. There the Field-mouse lived, warm and comfortable, and had a whole roomful of corn — a glorious kitchen and larder. Poor Thumbling stood at the door just like a poor beggar girl, and begged for a little bit of a barleycorn, for she had not had the smallest morsel to eat for the last two days.

"You poor little creature," said the Field-mouse — for after all she was a good old Field-mouse — "come into my warm room and dine with me."

As she was pleased with Thumbling, she said, "If you like, you may stay with me through the winter, but you must keep my room clean and neat, and tell me pretty little stories, because I am very fond of hearing those."

And Thumbling did as the kind old Field-mouse bade her, and had a very good time of it.

"Now we shall soon have a visitor," said the Field-mouse. "My neighbor is in the habit of visiting me once a week He is even better off than I am, has great rooms, and a beautiful black, velvety fur. If you could only get him for your husband, you would be well provided for. You must tell him the prettiest stories you know."

But Thumbling did not care about this; she thought nothing of the neighbor, for he was a mole. He came and paid his visits in his black velvet coat. The Field-mouse told how rich and how learned he was. and how his house was more

than twenty times larger than hers; that he had learning, but that he did not like the sun and beautiful flowers, for he had never seen them.

Thumbling had to sing, and she sang "Lady-bug, lady-bug, fly away home," and "When the parson goes afield." Then the Mole fell in love with her, because of her delicious voice; but he said nothing, for he was a very sedate person.

A short time before, he had dug a long passage through the earth from his own house to theirs; and Thumbling and the Field-mouse obtained leave to walk in this passage as much as they wished. But he begged them not to be afraid of the dead bird which was lying in the passage. It was an entire bird, with wings and a beak. It certainly must have died only a short time before, and was now buried just where the Mole had made his passage.

The Mole took a bit of decayed wood in his mouth, and it glimmered like fire in the dark; and then he went first and lighted them through the long, dark passage. When they came where the dead bird lay, the Mole thrust up his broad nose against the ceiling, so that a great hole was made, through which the daylight could shine down. In the middle of the floor lay a dead swallow, his beautiful wings pressed close against his sides, and his head and feet drawn back under his feathers: the poor bird had certainly died of cold. Thumbling was very sorry for this; she was very fond of all the little birds, who had sung and twittered so prettily before her through the summer; but the Mole gave him a push with his crooked legs, and said, "Now he doesn't pipe any more. It must be miserable to be born a little bird. I'm thankful that none of my children can be that: such a bird has nothing but his 'tweet-weet,' and has to starve in the winter!"

"Yes, you may well say that, as a clever man," observed the Mouse. "Of what use is all this 'tweet-weet' to a bird when the winter comes? He must starve and freeze. But they say that's aristocratic."

Thumbling said nothing; but when the two others turned their backs on the bird, she bent down, put the feathers aside which covered his head, and kissed him upon his closed eyes.

"Perhaps it was he who sang so prettily before me in the

summer," she thought. "How much pleasure he gave me, the dear, beautiful bird!"

The Mole now closed up the hole through which the daylight shone in, and accompanied the ladies home. But at night Thumbling could not sleep at all; so she got up out of her bed, and wove a large, beautiful carpet of hay, and carried it and spread it over the dead bird, and laid the thin stamens of flowers, soft as cotton, which she had found in the Field-mouse's room, at the bird's sides, so that he might lie soft in the ground.

"Farewell, you pretty little bird!" said she. "Farewell! and thanks to you for your beautiful song in the summer, when all the trees were green, and the sun shone down warmly upon us." And then she laid the bird's head upon her heart. But the bird was not dead; he was only lying there torpid with cold; and now he had been warmed, and came to life again.

In autumn all the swallows fly away to warm countries; but if one happens to be belated, it becomes so cold that it falls down as if dead, and lies where it fell, and then the cold snow covers it.

Thumbling fairly trembled, she was so startled; for the bird was large, very large, compared with her, who was only an inch in height. But she took courage, laid the cotton closer round the poor bird, and brought a leaf that she had used as her own coverlet, and laid it over the bird's head.

The next night she crept out to him again — and now he was alive, but quite weak; he could only open his eyes for a moment, and look at Thumbling, who stood before him with a bit of decayed wood in her hand, for she had not a lantern.

"I thank you, you pretty little child," said the sick Swallow; "I have been nicely warmed. Soon I shall get my strength back again, and I shall be able to fly about in the warm sunshine."

"O," she said, "it is so cold without. It snows and freezes. Stay in your warm bed, and I will nurse you."

Then she brought the Swallow water in the petal of a flower; and the Swallow drank, and told her how he had torn one of his wings in a thorn-bush, and thus had not been able

to fly so fast as the other swallows, which had sped away, far away, to the warm countries. So at last he had fallen to the ground, but he could remember nothing more, and did not know at all how he had come where she had found him.

The whole winter the Swallow remained there, and Thumbling nursed and tended him heartily. Neither the Field-mouse nor the Mole heard anything about it, for they did not like the poor Swallow. So soon as the spring came, and the sun warmed the earth, the Swallow bade Thumbling farewell, and she opened the hole which the Mole had made in the ceiling. The sun shone in upon them gloriously, and the Swallow asked if Thumbling would go with him; she could sit upon his back, and they would fly away far into the green wood. But Thumbling knew that the old Field-mouse would be grieved if she left her.

"No, I cannot!" said Thumbling.

"Farewell, farewell, you good, pretty girl!" said the Swallow; and he flew out in the sunshine. Thumbling looked after him, and the tears came into her eyes, for she was heartily and sincerely fond of the poor Swallow.

"Tweet-weet! tweet-weet!" said the bird, and flew into the green forest. Thumbling felt very sad. She did not get permission to go out into the warm sunshine. The corn which was sown in the field over the house of the Field-mouse grew up high into the air; it was quite a thick wood for the poor girl, who was only an inch in height.

"You are betrothed now, Thumbling," said the Field-mouse. "My neighbor has proposed for you. What great fortune for a poor child like you! Now you must work at your outfit, woolen and linen clothes both; for you must lack nothing when you have become the Mole's wife."

Thumbling had to turn the spindle, and the Mole hired four spiders to weave for her day and night. Every evening the Mole paid her a visit; and he was always saying that when the summer should draw to a close the sun would not shine nearly so hot, for that now it burned the earth almost as hard as a stone. Yes, when the summer should have gone, then he would keep his wedding-day with Thumbling. But she was not glad at all, for she did not like the tiresome Mole.

Every morning when the sun rose, and every evening when it went down, she crept out at the door; and when the wind blew the corn ears apart, so that she could see the blue sky, she thought how bright and beautiful it was out here, and wished heartily to see her dear Swallow again. But the Swallow did not come back; he had doubtless flown far away, in the fair, green forest. When autumn came on, Thumbling had all her outfit ready.

"In four weeks you shall celebrate your wedding," said the Field-mouse to her.

But Thumbling wept, and declared she would not have the tiresome Mole.

"Nonsense," said the Field-mouse; "don't be obstinate, or I will bite you with my white teeth. He is a very fine man whom you will marry. The Queen herself has not such a black velvet fur; and his kitchen is full. Be thankful for your good fortune."

Now the wedding was to be held. The Mole had already come to fetch Thumbling; she was to live with him, deep under the earth, and never to come out into the warm sunshine, for that he did not like. The poor little thing was very sorrowful; she was now to say farewell to the glorious sun, which, after all, she had been allowed by the Field-mouse to see from the threshold of the door.

"Farewell, thou bright sun!" she said, and stretched out her arms towards it, and walked a little way forth from the house of the Field-mouse, for now the corn had been reaped, and only the dry stubble stood in the fields. "Farewell!" she repeated, twining her arms round a little red flower which still bloomed there. "Greet the Swallow from me, if you see him again."

"Tweet-weet! tweet-weet!" a voice sounded suddenly over her head. She looked up; it was the little Swallow, who was just flying by. When he saw Thumbling he was very glad; and she told him how loath she was to have the ugly Mole for her husband, and that she was to live deep under the earth, where the sun never shone. And she could not refrain from weeping.

"The cold weather is coming now," said the Swallow; "I

am going to fly far away into the warm countries. Will you come with me? You can sit upon my back; then we shall fly from the ugly Mole and his dark room — away, far away, over the mountains, to the warm countries, where the sun shines warmer than here, where it is always summer, and there are lovely flowers. Only fly with me, you dear little Thumbling, you who have saved my life when I lay frozen in the dark, earthy passage"

"Yes, I will go with you!" said Thumbling, and she seated herself on the bird's back, with her feet on his outspread wing, and bound her girdle fast to one of his strongest feathers; then the Swallow flew up into the air, over forest and over sea, high up over the great mountains, where the snow always lies; and Thumbling felt cold in the bleak air, but then she hid under the bird's warm feathers, and only put out her little head to admire all the beauties beneath her.

At last they came to the warm countries. There the sun shone far brighter than here; the sky seemed twice as high; in ditches and on the hedges grew the most beautiful blue and green grapes; lemons and oranges hung in the woods; the air was fragrant with myrtles and balsams, and on the roads the loveliest children ran about, playing with the gay butterflies. But the Swallow flew still farther, and it became more and more beautiful. Under the most glorious green trees by the blue lake stood a palace of dazzling white marble from the olden time. Vines clustered all around the lofty pillars; at the top were many swallows' nests, and in one of these the Swallow lived who carried Thumbling.

"That is my house," said the Swallow; "but it is not right that you should live there. It is not yet properly arranged, by a great deal, and you will not be content with it. Select for yourself one of the splendid flowers which grow down yonder, then I will put you into it, and you shall have everything as nice as you can wish."

"This is delightful," cried she, clapping her hands.

A great marble pillar lay there, which had fallen to the ground and had been broken into three pieces; but between these pieces grew the most beautiful great white flowers. The Swallow flew down with Thumbling, and set her upon

one of the broad leaves. But what was the little maid's surprise? There sat a little man in the midst of the flower, as white and transparent as if he had been made of glass: he wore the neatest of gold crowns on his head, and the brightest wings on his shoulders; he himself was not bigger than Thumbling. He was the angel of the flower. In each of the flowers dwelt such a little man or woman, but this one was King over them all.

"Heavens! how beautiful he is!" whispered Thumbling to the Swallow.

The little Prince was very much frightened at the Swallow; for it was quite a gigantic bird to him, who was so small. But when he saw Thumbling, he became very glad; she was the prettiest maiden he had ever seen. Therefore he took off his golden crown, and put it upon her, and asked her name, and if she would be his wife, and then she should be Queen of all the flowers. Now this was truly a different kind of man to the son of the Toad, and the Mole with the black velvet fur. She therefore said "Yes" to the charming Prince. And out of every flower came a lady or a lord, so pretty to behold that it was a delight; each one brought Thumbling a present; but the best gift was a pair of beautiful wings which had belonged to a great white fly; these were fastened to Thumbling's back, and now she could fly from flower to flower. Then there was much rejoicing; and the little Swallow sat above them in his nest, and was to sing the marriage song, which he accordingly did as well as he could; but yet in his heart he was sad, for he was so fond, O! so fond of Thumbling, and would have liked never to part from her.

"You shall not be called Thumbling," said the Flower Angel to her; "that is an ugly name, and you are too fair for it; we will call you Maia."

"Farewell, farewell!" said the little Swallow, with a heavy heart; and he flew away again from the warm countries, far away back to Denmark. There he had a little nest over the window of the man who can tell fairy tales. Before him he sang, "Tweet-weet! tweet-weet!" and from him we have the whole story.

THE WICKED PRINCE.

A LEGEND.

ONCE upon a time, there was a wicked and haughty prince, whose thoughts constantly dwelt on how he might subjugate all the nations of the earth, and make his name a terror to all men. He ravaged with fire and sword; his soldiers trod down the grain in the fields; they put the torch to the peasant's cottage, so that the red flame licked the very leaves from the trees, and the fruit hung roasted from the black and singed limbs. Many a poor mother, with her naked babe, hid away behind the smoking ruins, and the soldiers sought her, and found her and the child, and then began their devilish sport: the demons of the pit could do no worse; but the Prince found it all to his liking; day by day he grew mightier, his name was feared by everybody, and good fortune came upon him to his heart's content. From the conquered cities he carried away gold and great treasure, and amassed in his capital such riches as were never before found together in one place. Then he built superb palaces, temples, and arches; and whoever saw his magnificence, exclaimed, "What a great Prince!" — never thinking of the desolation he had brought over many lands, nor listening to the groans and wailings that arose from the cities which fire had laid waste.

The Prince looked upon his gold, looked upon his superb buildings, and thought, as folks did, "What a great Prince!" "But I wish to have more, much more! No power is there that can equal, much less surpass, mine!" And so he went to war with his neighbors and subdued them all. The vanquished kings he chained to his chariot with golden chains, when he drove through the streets; and when he sat down to his table, they were made to lie at his and his courtiers' feet, and eat the morsels that might be thrown to them.

Now the Prince caused his image to be set up in the market-places and in the royal palaces; yea, he would have set it up in the temples before the altar of the Lord; but the

priests said, "Prince, thou art great, but God is greater: we dare not do it."

"Well," said the wicked Prince, "then I shall conquer Him likewise!" and in his heart's pride and folly, he built an artfully contrived ship, in which he could sail through the air; it was decked with peacocks'-feathers, and seemed spangled with a thousand eyes; but each eye was a gun's mouth, and the Prince sat in the midst of the ship, and, upon his touching a certain spring, a thousand bullets would dart forth, and the guns would at once be loaded afresh. Hundreds of strong eagles were harnessed to the ship, and so it flew away, up towards the sun. The earth lay far beneath; at first it appeared, with its mountains and forests, like a ploughed meadow, with a tuft of green here and there peeping out from under the upturned sod; then it resembled an unrolled map; and presently it was wholly hid in mists and clouds. Higher and higher the eagles flew; when God sent forth a single one of his countless angels, at whom the wicked Prince immediately let fly a thousand bullets; but the bullets dropped like hail from the angel's shining wings, and one drop of blood — but one — dripped from one of the white pinions, and fell on the ship wherein sat the Prince; it burned itself fast there, and weighed with a weight of a thousand hundred-weight, and with thundering speed tore the ship down back to the earth. The eagles' strong wings were broken, the winds roared about the Prince's head; and the clouds round about, which had sprung from the smoke of the burned cities, formed themselves into terrific shapes, — anon like mile-long crab-fish reaching out their huge claws after him, — anon like rolling boulders or like fiery dragons: half dead he lay in his ship, when it finally was caught in the tangled branches of a dense forest.

"I *will* conquer God!" said he; "I have vowed it, and my will shall be done!" and during seven years he builded artfully contrived vessels, in which to sail through the air, and caused thunderbolts to be forged from the hardest of steel, wherewith to batter down heaven's battlements. From all countries, he assembled vast armies, which covered many miles of ground in length and breadth, when formed in bat-

tle array. They embarked in the artfully built vessels, and already the King himself approached his; when God sent forth a swarm of gnats — one little swarm — which buzzed about the King, and stung his face and hands. In anger he drew his sword; but he beat the void air only: the gnats he could not strike. Whereupon he commanded that costly cloths be brought, and wrapped about him, so that no gnat might reach him with its sting. It was done as he had commanded; but one little gnat had lodged itself in the folds of the inmost cloth, and crept into the King's ear and stung him; the sting smarted as fire, the poison flew up into his head; he tore himself loose, flung the cloths far away, rent his garments asunder, and danced naked before the rough and savage soldiers, who now mocked the mad Prince that had set out to besiege God, and had been himself undone by one tiny gnat.

THE SNOW-QUEEN.

FIRST STORY,

Which treats of a Mirror and of the Splinters.

NOW, then, let us begin. When we are at the end of the story, we shall know more than we know now: but to begin.

Once upon a time there was a wicked Sprite, indeed he was the most mischievous of all sprites. One day he was in a very good humor, for he had made a mirror with the power of causing all that was good and beautiful, when it was reflected therein, to look poor and mean; but that which was good for nothing and looked ugly, was shown magnified and increased in ugliness. In this mirror the most beautiful landscapes looked like boiled spinach, and the best persons were turned into frights, or appeared to stand on their heads; their faces were so distorted that they were not to be recognized; and if any one had a mole, you might be sure that it would be magnified and spread over both nose and mouth. "That's glorious fun!" said the Sprite. If a good thought passed through a man's mind, then a grin was seen in the mirror, and the Sprite laughed heartily at his clever discovery.

All the little sprites who went to his school — for he kept a sprite-school — told each other that a miracle had happened; and that now only, as they thought, it would be possible to see how the world really looked. They ran about with the mirror; and at last there was not a land or a person who was not represented distorted in the mirror. So then they thought they would fly up to the sky, and have a joke there. The higher they flew with the mirror, the more terribly it grinned; they could hardly hold it fast. Higher and higher still they flew, nearer and nearer to the stars, when suddenly the mirror shook so terribly with grinning, that it flew out of their hands and fell to the earth, where it was dashed in a hundred million and more pieces. And now it worked much more evil than before; for some of these pieces were hardly so large as a grain of sand, and they flew about in the wide world, and when they got into people's eyes, there they stayed; and then people saw everything perverted, or only had an eye for that which was evil. This happened because the very smallest bit had the same power which the whole mirror had possessed. Some persons even got a splinter in their heart, and then it made one shudder, for their heart became like a lump of ice. Some of the broken pieces were so large that they were used for window-panes, through which one could not see one's friends. Other pieces were put in spectacles; and that was a sad affair when people put on their glasses to see well and rightly. Then the wicked Sprite laughed till he almost choked, for all this tickled his fancy. The fine splinters still flew about in the air: and now we shall hear what happened next.

SECOND STORY.

A Little Boy and a Little Girl.

In a large town, where there are so many houses, and so many people, that there is no room left for everybody to have a little garden; and where, on this account, most persons are obliged to content themselves with flowers in pots, there lived two little children, who had a garden somewhat larger than a flower-pot. They were not brother and sister; but they cared for each other as much as if they were. Their parents lived exactly opposite. They inhabited two garrets; and where the roof of the one house joined that of the other, and the gutter ran along the extreme end of it, there was to each house a small window: one needed only to step over the gutter to get from one window to the other.

The children's parents had large wooden boxes there, in which vegetables for the kitchen were planted, and little rose-trees besides: there was a rose in each box, and they grew splendidly. They now thought of placing the boxes across the gutter, so that they nearly reached from one window to the other, and looked just like two walls of flowers. The tendrils of the peas hung down over the boxes, and the rose-trees shot up long branches, twined around the windows, and

then bent towards each other: it was almost like a triumphal arch of foliage and flowers. The boxes were very high, and the children knew that they must not creep over them; so they often obtained permission to get out of the windows to each other, and to sit on their little stools among the roses, where they could play delightfully. In winter there was an end of this pleasure. The windows were often frozen over; but then they heated copper farthings on the stove, and laid the hot farthing on the window-pane, and then they had a capital peep-hole, quite nicely rounded; and out of each peeped a gentle, friendly eye — it was the little boy and the little girl who were looking out. His name was Kay, hers was Gerda. In summer, with one jump, they could get to each other; but in winter they were obliged first to go down the long stairs, and then up the long stairs again: and out-of-doors there was quite a snow-storm.

"It is the white bees that are swarming," said Kay's old grandmother.

"Do the white bees choose a queen?" asked the little boy; for he knew that the honey-bees always have one.

"Yes," said the grandmother, "she flies where the swarm hangs in the thickest clusters. She is the largest of all; and she can never remain quietly on the earth, but goes up again into the black clouds. Many a winter's night she flies through the streets of the town, and peeps in at the windows; and they then freeze in so wondrous a manner that they look like flowers."

"Yes, I have seen it," said both the children; and so they knew that it was true.

"Can the Snow-Queen come in?" said the little girl.

"Only let her come in!" said the little boy; "then I'd put her on the stove, and she'd melt."

And then his grandmother patted his head, and told him other stories.

In the evening, when little Kay was at home, and half undressed, he climbed up on the chair by the window, and peeped out of the little hole. A few snow-flakes were falling, and one, the largest of all, remained lying on the edge of a flower-pot. The flake of snow grew larger and larger · and

at last it was like a young lady, dressed in the finest white gauze, made of a million little flakes, like stars. She was so beautiful and delicate, but she was of ice, of dazzling, sparkling ice; yet she lived; her eyes gazed fixedly, like two stars; but there was neither quiet nor repose in them. She nodded toward the window, and beckoned with her hand. The little boy was frightened, and jumped down from the chair; it seemed to him as if, at the same moment, a large bird flew past the window.

The next day it was a sharp frost; and then the spring came; the sun shone, the green leaves appeared, the swallows built their nests, the windows were opened, and the little children again sat in their pretty garden, high up on the leads at top of the house.

That summer the roses flowered in unwonted beauty. The little girl had learned a hymn, in which there was something about roses; and then she thought of her own flowers; and she sang the verse to the little boy, who then sang it with her: —

"The rose in the valley is blooming so sweet,
The Child Jesus is there the children to greet."

And the children held each other by the hand, kissed the roses, looked up at the clear sunshine, and spoke as if they really saw Jesus there. What lovely summer days those were! How delightful to be out in the air, near the fresh rose-bushes, that seemed as if they would never finish blossoming!

Kay and Gerda looked at the picture-book full of beasts and of birds; and it was then — the clock in the church-tower was just striking five — that Kay said, "O! I feel such a sharp pain in my heart; and now something has got into my eye!"

The little girl put her arms round his neck. He winked his eyes; now there was nothing to be seen.

"I think it is out now," said he; but it was not. It was just one of those pieces of glass from the magic mirror that had got into his eye; and poor Kay had got another piece right in his heart. It will soon become like ice. It did not hurt any longer, but there it was.

"What are you crying for?" asked he. "You look so

ugly! There's nothing the matter with me. Ah," said he at once, "that rose is cankered! and, look, this one is quite crooked! after all, these roses are very ugly! they are just like the box they are planted in!" And then he gave the box a good kick with his foot, and pulled both the roses up.

"What are you doing?" cried the little girl; and as he perceived her fright, he pulled up another rose, got in at the window, and hastened off from dear little Gerda.

Afterwards, when she brought her picture-book, he asked, "What horrid beasts had she there?" and if his grandmother told him stories, he always interrupted her; besides, if he could manage it, he would get behind her, put on her spectacles, and imitate her way of speaking: he copied all her ways, and then everybody laughed at him. He was soon able to imitate the gait and manner of every one in the street. Everything that was peculiar and displeasing in them, — that Kay knew how to imitate; and at such times all the people said. "The boy is certainly very clever!" But it was the glass he had got in his eye; the glass that was sticking in his heart, which made him tease even little Gerda, whose whole soul was devoted to him.

His games now were quite different to what they had formerly been, they were so very knowing. One winter's day, when the flakes of snow were flying about, he spread the skirts of his blue coat, and caught the snow as it fell.

"Look through this glass, Gerda," said he. And every flake seemed larger, and appeared like a magnificent flower, or a beautiful star: it was splendid to look at!

"Look, how clever!" said Kay. "That's much more interesting than real flowers! They are as exact as possible; there is not a fault in them, if they did not melt!"

It was not long after this that Kay came one day with large gloves on, and his little sledge at his back, and bawled right into Gerda's ears, "I have permission to go out into the square, where the others are playing;" and off he was in a moment.

There, in the market-place, some of the boldest of the boys used to tie their sledges to the carts as they passed by, and so they were pulled along, and got a good ride. It was so

capital! Just as they were in the very height of their amusement, a large sledge passed by: it was painted quite white, and there was some one in it wrapped up in a rough white mantle of fur, with a rough white fur cap on his head. The sledge drove round the square twice, and Kay tied on his as quickly as he could, and off he drove with it. On they went quicker and quicker into the next street; and the person who drove turned round to Kay, and nodded to him in a friendly manner, just as if they knew each other. Every time he was going to untie his sledge the person nodded to him, and then Kay sat quiet; and so on they went till they came outside the gates of the town. Then the snow began to fall so thickly, that the little boy could not see an arm's length before him, but still on he went; when suddenly he let go the string he held in his hand in order to get loose from the sledge, but it was of no use; still the little vehicle rushed on with the quickness of the wind. He then cried as loud as he could, but no one heard him; the snow drifted and the sledge flew on, and sometimes it gave a jerk as though they were driving over hedges and ditches. He was quite frightened, and he tried to repeat the Lord's Prayer; but all he could do, he was only able to remember the multiplication table.

The snow-flakes grew larger and larger, till at last they looked just like great white fowls. Suddenly they flew on one side; the large sledge stopped, and the person who drove rose up. It was a lady; her cloak and cap were of snow. She was tall, of slender figure, and of a dazzling whiteness. It was the Snow-Queen.

"We have travelled fast," said she; "but it is freezingly cold. Come under my bearskin." And she put him in the sledge beside her, wrapped the fur round him, and he felt as though he were sinking in a snow-wreath.

"Are you still cold?" asked she; and then she kissed his forehead. Ah! it was colder than ice; it penetrated to his very heart, which was already almost a frozen lump; it seemed to him as if he were about to die,—but a moment more and it was quite congenial to him, and he did not remark the cold that was around him.

"My sledge! Do not forget my sledge!" It was the

first thing he thought of. It was there, tied to one of the white chickens, who flew along with it on his back behind the large sledge. The Snow-Queen kissed Kay once more, and then he forgot little Gerda, grandmother, and all whom he had left at his home.

"Now you will have no more kisses," said she, "or else I should kiss you to death!"

Kay looked at her. She was very beautiful; a more clever or a more lovely countenance he could not fancy to himself; and she no longer appeared of ice as before, when she sat outside the window, and beckoned to him; in his eyes she was perfect; he did not fear her at all, and told her that he could calculate in his head, and with fractions even; that he knew the number of square miles there were in the different countries, and how many inhabitants they contained; and she smiled while he spoke. It then seemed to him as if what he knew was not enough, and he looked upwards in the large, huge, empty space above him, and on she flew with him; flew high over the black clouds. while the storm moaned and whistled as though it were singing some old tune. On they flew over woods and lakes, over seas and many lands; and beneath them the chilling storm rushed fast, the wolves howled, the snow crackled; above them flew large screaming crows, but higher up appeared the moon, quite large and bright; and it was on it that Kay gazed during the long, long winter's night, while by day he slept at the feet of the Snow-Queen.

THIRD STORY.

Of the Flower-garden at the old Woman's who understood Witchcraft.

But what became of little Gerda when Kay did not return? Where could he be? Nobody knew; nobody could give any intelligence. All the boys knew was, that they had seen him tie his sledge to another large and splendid one, which drove down the street and out of the town. Nobody knew where he was; many sad tears were shed, and little Gerda wept long and bitterly; at last she said he must be dead; that he had been drowned in the river which flowed close to the town. O! those were very long and dismal winter evenings!

At last spring came with its warm sunshine.

"Kay is dead and gone!" said little Gerda.

"That I don't believe," said the Sunshine.

"Kay is dead and gone!" said she to the Swallows.

"That we don't believe," said they; and at last little Gerda did not think so any longer either.

"I'll put on my red shoes," said she, one morning; "Kay has never seen them, and then I'll go down to the river and ask there."

It was quite early: she kissed her old grandmother, who

was still asleep, put on her red shoes, and went alone to the river.

"Is it true that you have taken my little playfellow? I will make you a present of my red shoes, if you will give him back to me."

And, as it seemed to her, the blue waves nodded in a strange manner; then she took off her red shoes, the most precious things she possessed, and threw them both into the river. But they fell close to the bank, and the little waves bore them immediately to land; it was as if the stream would not take what was dearest to her; for in reality it had not got little Kay: but Gerda thought that she had not thrown the shoes out far enough, so she clambered into a boat which lay among the rushes, went to the farthest end, and threw out the shoes. But the boat was not fastened, and the motion which she occasioned made it drift from the shore. She observed this, and hastened to get back; but before she could do so, the boat was more than a yard from the land, and was gliding quickly onward.

Little Gerda was very much frightened, and began to cry; but no one heard her except the Sparrows, and they could not carry her to land; but they flew along the bank, and sang as if to comfort her, "Here we are! here we are!" The boat drifted with the stream, little Gerda sat quite still without shoes, for they were swimming behind the boat, but could not reach it, because it went much faster than they did.

The banks on both sides were beautiful; lovely flowers, venerable trees, and slopes with sheep and cows, but not a human being was to be seen.

"Perhaps the river will carry me to little Kay," said she; and then she grew less sad. She rose, and looked for many hours at the beautiful green banks. Presently she sailed by a large cherry-orchard, where was a little cottage with curious red and blue windows; it was thatched, and before it two wooden soldiers stood sentry, and presented arms when any one went past.

Gerda called to them, for she thought they were alive; but they, of course, did not answer. She came close to them, for the stream drifted the boat quite near the land.

Gerda called still louder, and an old woman then came out of the cottage, leaning upon a crooked stick. She had a large broad-brimmed hat on, painted with the most splendid flowers.

"Poor little child!" said the old Woman, "how did you get upon the large rapid river, to be driven about so in the wide world!" And then the old Woman went into the water, caught hold of the boat with her crooked stick, drew it to the bank, and lifted little Gerda out.

And Gerda was so glad to be on dry land again; but she was rather afraid of the strange old Woman.

"But come and tell me who you are, and how you came here," said she.

And Gerda told her all; and the old Woman shook her head and said, "A-hem! a-hem!" and when Gerda had told her everything, and asked her if she had not seen little Kay, the Woman answered that he had not passed there, but he no doubt would come; and she told her not to be cast down, but taste her cherries, and look at her flowers, which were finer than any in a picture-book, each of which could tell a whole story. She then took Gerda by the hand, led her into the little cottage, and locked the door.

The windows were very high up; the glass was red, blue, and green, and the sunlight shone through quite wondrously in all sorts of colors. On the table stood the most exquisite cherries, and Gerda ate as many as she chose, for she had permission to do so. While she was eating, the old Woman combed her hair with a golden comb, and her hair curled and shone with a lovely golden color around that sweet little face, which was so round and so like a rose.

"I have often longed for such a dear little girl," said the old Woman. "Now you shall see how well we agree together;" and while she combed little Gerda's hair, the child forgot her foster-brother Kay more and more, for the old Woman understood magic; but she was no evil being, she only practiced witchcraft a little for her own private amusement, and now she wanted very much to keep little Gerda. She therefore went out into the garden, stretched out her crooked stick towards the rose-bushes, which, beautifully as

they were blowing, all sank into the earth, and no one could tell where they had stood. The old Woman feared that if Gerda should see the roses, she would then think of her own, would remember little Kay, and run away from her.

She now led Gerda into the flower-garden. O, what odor and what loveliness was there! Every flower that one could think of, and of every season, stood there in fullest bloom; no picture-book could be gayer or more beautiful. Gerda jumped for joy, and played till the sun set behind the tall cherry-tree: she then had a pretty bed, with a red silken coverlet filled with blue violets. She fell asleep, and had as pleasant dreams as ever a queen on her wedding-day.

The next morning she went to play with the flowers in the warm sunshine, and thus passed away a day. Gerda knew every flower; and, numerous as they were, it still seemed to Gerda that one was wanting, though she did not know which. One day, while she was looking at the hat of the old Woman painted with flowers, the most beautiful of them all seemed to her to be a rose. The old Woman had forgotten to take it from her hat when she made the others vanish in the earth. But so it is when one's thoughts are not collected. "What!" said Gerda; "are there no roses here?" and she ran about amongst the flower-beds, and looked, and looked, but there was not one to be found. She then sat down and wept; but her hot tears fell just where a rose-bush had sunk; and when her warm tears watered the ground, the tree shot up suddenly as fresh and blooming as when it had been swallowed up. Gerda kissed the roses, thought of her own dear roses at home, and with them of little Kay.

"O, how long I have stayed!" said the little girl. "I intended to look for Kay! Don't you know where he is?" asked she of the Roses. "Do you think he is dead and gone?"

"Dead he certainly is not," said the Roses. "We have been in the earth where all the dead are, but Kay was not there."

"Many thanks!" said little Gerda; and she went to the other flowers, looked into their cups, and asked, "Don't you know where little Kay is?"

But every flower stood in the sunshine, and dreamed its own fairy-tale or its own story; and they all told her very many things, but not one knew anything of Kay.

Well, what did the Tiger-lily say?

"Hearest thou not the drum? Bum! bum! those are the only two tones. Always bum! bum! Hark to the plaintive song of the old woman! to the call of the priests! The Hindoo woman in her long robe stands upon the funeral pile; the flames rise around her and her dead husband, but the Hindoo woman thinks on the living one in the surrounding circle; on him whose eyes burn hotter than the flames — on him, the fire of whose eyes pierces her heart more than the flames which soon will burn her body to ashes. Can the heart's flame die in the flame of the funeral pile?"

"I don't understand that at all," said little Gerda.

"That is my story," said the Lily.

What did the Convolvulus say?

"Projecting over a narrow mountain-path there hangs an old feudal castle. Thick evergreens grow on the dilapidated walls and around the altar, where a lovely maiden is standing: she bends over the railing and looks out upon the rose. No fresher rose hangs on the branches than she; no apple-blossom carried away by the wind is more buoyant! How her splendid silken robe is rustling!

"'Is he not yet come?'"

"Is it Kay that you mean?" asked little Gerda.

"I am speaking about my story — about my dream," answered the Convolvulus.

What did the Snow-drops say?

"Between the trees a long board is hanging — it is a swing. Two little girls are sitting in it, and swing themselves backward and forward: their frocks are as white as snow, and long green silk ribbons flutter from their bonnets. Their brother, who is older than they are, stands up in the swing; he twines his arms round the cords to hold himself fast, for in one hand he has a little cup, and in the other a clay pipe. He is blowing soap-bubbles. The swing moves, and the bubbles float in charming, changing colors; the last is still hanging to the end of the pipe, and rocks in the breeze. The

swing moves. The little black dog, as light as a soap-bubble, jumps up on his hind legs to try to get into the swing. It moves, the dog falls down, barks, and is angry. They tease him; the bubble bursts! A swing — a bursting bubble — such is my song!"

"What you relate may be very pretty, but you tell it in so melancholy a manner, and do not mention Kay."

What do the Hyacinths say?

"There were once upon a time three sisters, quite transparent and very beautiful. The robe of the one was red, that of the second blue, and that of the third white. They danced hand in hand beside the calm lake in the clear moonshine. They were not elfin maidens, but mortal children. A sweet fragrance was smelt, and the maidens vanished in the wood; the fragrance grew stronger — three coffins, and in them three lovely maidens, passed out of the forest and across the lake: the shining glow-worms flew around like little floating lights. Do the dancing maidens sleep, or are they dead? The odor of the flowers says they are corpses; the evening bell tolls for the dead!"

"You make me quite sad," said little Gerda. "I cannot help thinking of the dead maidens. O! is little Kay really dead? The Roses have been in the earth, and they say no."

"Ding, dong!" sounded the Hyacinth bells. "We do not toll for little Kay: we do not know him. That is our way of singing, the only one we have."

And Gerda went to the Ranunculuses, that looked forth from among the shining green leaves.

"You are a little bright sun!" said Gerda. "Tell me if you know where I can find my playfellow."

And the Ranunculus shone brightly, and looked again at Gerda. What song could the Ranunculus sing? It was one that said nothing about Kay either.

"In a small court the bright sun was shining in the first days of spring. The beams glided down the white walls of a neighbor's house, and close by the fresh yellow flowers were growing, shining like gold in the warm sun-rays. An old grandmother was sitting in the air; her granddaughter, the poor and lovely servant just come for a short visit. She

knows her grandmother. There was gold, pure, virgin gold in that blessed kiss. There, that is my little story," said the Ranunculus.

"My poor old grandmother!" sighed Gerda. "Yes, she is longing for me, no doubt; she is sorrowing for me, as she did for little Kay. But I will soon come home, and then I will bring Kay with me. It is of no use asking the flowers; they only know their own old rhymes, and can tell me nothing." And she tucked up her frock, to enable her to run quicker; but the Narcissus gave her a knock on the leg, just as she was going to jump over it. So she stood still, looked at the long, yellow flower, and asked, "You perhaps know something?" and she bent down to the Narcissus. And what did it say?

"I can see myself — I can see myself! O, how odorous I am! Up in the little garret there stands half-dressed a little Dancer. She stands now on one leg, now on both; she despises the whole world; yet she lives only in imagination. She pours water out of the tea-pot over a piece of stuff which she holds in her hand; it is the bodice: cleanliness is a fine thing. The white dress is hanging on the hook; it was washed in the tea-pot, and dried on the roof. She puts it on, ties a saffron-colored kerchief round her neck, and then the gown looks whiter. I can see myself — I can see myself!"

"That's nothing to me," said little Gerda. "That does not concern me." And then off she ran to the further end of the garden.

The gate was locked, but she shook the rusted bolt till it was loosened, and the gate opened; and little Gerda ran off barefooted into the wide world. She looked round her thrice, but no one followed her. At last she could run no longer: she sat down on a large stone, and when she looked abou her, she saw that the summer had passed; it was late in the autumn, but that one could not remark in the beautiful garden, where there was always sunshine, and where there were flowers the whole year round.

"Dear me, how long I have stayed!" said Gerda. "Au tumn is come. I must not rest any longer." And she got up to go further.

O, how tender and wearied her little feet were! All around it looked so cold and raw; the long willow-leaves were quite yellow, and the fog dripped from them like water; one leaf fell after the other: the sloes only stood full of fruit which set one's teeth on edge. O, how dark and comfortless it was in the dreary world!

FOURTH STORY.

The Prince and Princess.

Gerda was obliged to rest herself again, when, exactly opposite to her, a large raven came hopping over the white snow. He had long been looking at Gerda and shaking his head; and now he said, "Caw! caw!" Good day! good day! He could not say it better; but he felt a sympathy for the little girl, and asked her where she was going all alone. The word "alone" Gerda understood quite well, and felt how much was expressed by it; so she told the Raven her whole history, and asked if he had not seen Kay.

The Raven nodded very gravely, and said, "It may be—it may be!"

"What! do you really think so?" cried the little girl; and she nearly squeezed the Raven to death, so much did she kiss him.

"Gently, gently," said the Raven. "I think I know; I

think that it may be little Kay. But now he has forgotten you for the Princess."

"Does he live with a princess?" asked Gerda.

"Yes, — listen," said the Raven; "but it will be difficult for me to speak your language. If you understand the raven language, I can tell you better."

"No, I have not learnt it," said Gerda; "but my grandmother understands it, and she can speak gibberish too. I wish I had learnt it."

"No matter," said the Raven; "I will tell you as well as I can; however, it will be bad enough." And then he told all he knew.

"In the kingdom where we now are there lives a princess, who is extraordinarily clever; for she has read all the newspapers in the whole world, and has forgotten them again, — so clever is she. She was lately, it is said, sitting on her throne, — which is not so very amusing, after all, — when she began humming an old tune, and it was just 'O, why should I not be married?' 'That song is not without its meaning,' said she, and so then she was determined to marry; but she would have a husband who knew how to give an answer when he was spoken to, — not one who looked only as if he were a great personage, for that is so tiresome. She then had all the ladies of the court drummed together; and when they heard her intention, all were well pleased, and said, 'We are quite glad to hear it; it is the very thing we were thinking of.' You may believe every word I say," said the Raven, "for I have a tame sweetheart that hops about in the palace quite free, and it was she who told me all this.

"The newspapers appeared forthwith with a border of hearts and the initials of the Princess; and therein you might read that every good-looking young man was at liberty to come to the palace and speak to the Princess; and he who spoke in such wise as showed he felt himself at home there, that one the Princess would choose for her husband.

"Yes — yes," said the Raven, "you may believe it; it is as true as I am sitting here. People came in crowds; there was a crush and a hurry, but no one was successful either on the first or second day. They could all talk well enough

when they were out in the street; but as soon as they came inside the palace-gates, and saw the guard richly dressed in silver, and the lackeys in gold, on the staircase, and the large illuminated saloons, then they were abashed; and when they stood before the throne on which the Princess was sitting, all they could do was to repeat the last word they had uttered, and to hear it again did not interest her very much. It was just as if the people within were under a charm, and had fallen into a trance till they came out again into the street; for then, — O, then, they could chatter enough. There was a whole row of them standing from the town-gates to the palace. I was there myself to look," said the Raven. "They grew hungry and thirsty: but from the palace they got nothing whatever, not even a glass of water. Some of the cleverest, it is true, had taken bread and butter with them; but none shared it with his neighbor, for each thought, 'Let him look hungry, and then the Princess won't have him.'"

"But Kay — little Kay," said Gerda, "when did he come? Was he among the number?"

"Patience, patience; we are just come to him. It was on the third day, when a little personage, without horse or equipage, came marching right boldly up to the palace; his eyes shone like yours, he had beautiful long hair, but his clothes were very shabby."

"That was Kay," cried Gerda, with a voice of delight. "O, now I've found him!" and she clapped her hands for joy.

"He had a little knapsack at his back," said the Raven.

"No, that was certainly his sledge," said Gerda; "for when he went away he took his sledge with him."

"That may be," said the Raven; "I did not examine him so minutely: but I know from my tame sweetheart that when he came into the court-yard of the palace, and saw the body-guard in silver, the lackeys on the staircase, he was not the least abashed; he nodded, and said to them, 'It must be very tiresome to stand on the stairs; for my part, I shall go in.' The saloons were gleaming with lustres; privy-councilors and excellencies were walking about barefoot, and wore gold keys; it was enough to make anyone feel uncomfortable. His boots creaked, too, so loudly; but still he was not at all afraid."

"That's Kay, for certain," said Gerda. "I know he had on new boots; I have heard them creaking in grandmamma's room."

"Yes, they creaked," said the Raven. "And on he went boldly up to the Princess, who was sitting on a pearl as large as a spinning-wheel. All the ladies of the court, with their attendants and attendants' attendants, and all the cavaliers, with their gentlemen and gentlemen's gentlemen, stood round; and the nearer they stood to the door, the prouder they looked. It was hardly possible to look at the gentleman's gentleman, so very haughtily did he stand in the doorway."

"It must have been terrible," said little Gerda. "And did Kay get the Princess?"

"Were I not a Raven, I should have taken the Princess myself, although I am promised. It is said he spoke as well as I speak when I talk raven language; this I learned from my tame sweetheart. He was bold and nicely behaved; he had not come to woo the Princess, but only to hear her wisdom. She pleased him, and he pleased her."

"Yes, yes; for certain that was Kay," said Gerda. "He was so clever; he could reckon fractions in his head. O, won't you take me to the palace?"

"That is very easily said," answered the Raven. "But how are we to manage it? I'll speak to my tame sweetheart about it; she must advise us; for so much I must tell you, such a little girl as you are will never get permission to enter."

"O yes I shall," said Gerda; "when Kay hears that I am here, he will come out directly to fetch me."

"Wait for me here on these steps," said the Raven. He moved his head backward and forward, and flew away.

The evening was closing in when the Raven returned. "Caw! caw!" said he. "She sends you her compliments, and here is a roll for you. She took it out of the kitchen, where there is bread enough. You are hungry, no doubt. It is not possible for you to enter the palace, for you are barefoot; the guards in silver and the lackeys in gold would not allow it; but do not cry, you shall come in still. My sweetheart knows a little back-stair that leads to the

bed-chamber, and she knows where she can get the key of it."

And they went into the garden by the large avenue, where one leaf was falling after the other; and when the lights in the palace had all gradually disappeared, the Raven led little Gerda to the backdoor, which stood half open.

O how Gerda's heart beat with anxiety and longing! It was just as if she had been about to do something wrong; and yet she only wanted to know if little Kay was there. Yes, he must be there. She called to mind his intelligent eyes and his long hair so vividly, she could quite see him as he used to laugh when they were sitting under the roses at home. "He will, no doubt, be glad to see you, — to hear what a long way you have come for his sake; to know how unhappy all at home were when he did not come back."

O what a fright and a joy it was!

They were now on the stairs. A single lamp was burning there; and on the floor stood the tame Raven, turning her head on every side and looking at Gerda, who bowed as her grandmother had taught her to do.

"My intended has told me so much good of you, my dear young lady," said the tame Raven. "Your tale is very affecting. If you will take the lamp, I will go before. We will go straight on, for we shall meet no one."

"I think there is somebody just behind us," said Gerda; and something rushed past: it was like shadowy figures on the wall; horses with flowing manes and thin legs, huntsmen, ladies and gentlemen on horseback.

"They are only dreams," said the Raven. "They come to fetch the thoughts of the high personages to the chase: 'tis well, for now you can observe them in bed all the better. But let me find, when you enjoy honor and distinction, that you possess a grateful heart."

"Tut! that's not worth talking about," said the Raven of the woods.

They now entered the first saloon, which was of rose-colored satin, with artificial flowers on the wall. Here the dreams were rushing past, but they hastened by so quickly that Gerda could not see the high personages. One hall was

more magnificent than the other ; one might indeed well be abashed ; and at last they came into the bed-chamber. The ceiling of the room resembled a large palm-tree, with leaves of glass, of costly glass ; and in the middle, from a thick golden stem, hung two beds, each of which resembled a lily. One was white, and in this lay the Princess : the other was red, and it was here that Gerda was to look for little Kay. She bent back one of the red leaves, and saw a brown neck — O, that was Kay ! She called him quite loud by name, held the lamp toward him — the dreams rushed back again into the chamber — he awoke, turned his head, and — it was not little Kay !

The Prince was only like him about the neck ; but he was young and handsome. And out of the white lily leaves the Princess peeped too, and asked what was the matter. Then little Gerda cried and told her her whole history, and all that the Ravens had done for her.

" Poor little thing ! " said the Prince and the Princess. They praised the Ravens very much, and told them they were not at all angry with them, but they were not to do so again. However, they should have a reward.

" Will you fly about here at liberty," asked the Princess ; " or would you like to have a fixed appointment as court ravens, with all the broken bits from the kitchen ? "

And both the Ravens nodded, and begged for a fixed appointment ; for they thought of their old age, and said, " it was a good thing to have a provision for their old days."

And the Prince got up and let Gerda sleep in his bed, and more than this he could not do. She folded her little hands, and thought, " How good men and animals are ! " and she then fell asleep and slept soundly. All the dreams flew in again, and they now looked like the angels ; they drew a little sledge, in which little Kay sat and nodded his head ; but the whole was only a dream, and therefore it all vanished as soon as she awoke.

The next day she was dressed from head to foot in silk and velvet. They offered to let her stay at the palace, and lead a happy life ; but she begged to have a little carriage with a horse in front, and for a small pair of shoes : then,

she said, she would again go forth in the wide world and look for Kay.

Shoes and a muff were given her; she was, too, dressed very nicely; and when she was about to set off, a new carriage stopped before the door. It was of pure gold, and the arms of the Prince and Princess shone like a star upon it; the coachman, the footmen, and the outriders, for outriders were there too, all wore golden crowns. The Prince and the Princess assisted her into the carriage themselves, and wished her all success. The Raven of the woods, who was now married, accompanied her for the first three miles. He sat beside Gerda, for he could not bear riding backward; the other Raven stood in the doorway, and flapped her wings; she could not accompany Gerda, because she suffered from headache since she had had a fixed appointment and ate so much. The carriage was lined inside with sugar-plums, and in the seats were fruits and gingerbread.

"Farewell! farewell!" cried Prince and Princess; and Gerda wept, and the Raven wept. Thus passed the first miles; and then the Raven bade her farewell, and this was the most painful separation of all. He flew into a tree, and beat his black wings as long as he could see the carriage, that shone from afar like a sunbeam.

FIFTH STORY.

The Little Robber-maiden.

They drove through the dark wood; but the carriage shone like a torch, and it dazzled the eyes of the robbers, so that they could not bear to look at it.

"'Tis gold! 'tis gold!" cried they; and they rushed forward, seized the horses, knocked down the little postilion, the coachman, and the servants, and pulled little Gerda out of the carriage.

"How plump, how beautiful she is! She must have been fed on nut-kernels," said the old female Robber, who had a long, scrubby beard, and bushy eyebrows that hung down over her eyes: "she is as good as a fatted lamb! how nice she will be!" And then she drew out a knife, the blade of which shone so that it was quite dreadful to behold.

"O!" cried the woman at the same moment. She had been bitten in the ear by her own little daughter, who hung at her back; and who was so wild and unmanageable that it was quite amusing to see her. "You naughty child!" said the mother; and now she had not time to kill Gerda.

"She shall play with me," said the little Robber-child: "she shall give me her muff, and her pretty frock; she shall sleep in my bed!" And then she gave her mother another bite, so that she jumped, and ran round with the pain; and the robbers laughed, and said, "Look how she is dancing with the little one!"

"I will go into the carriage," said the little Robber-maiden; and she would have her will, for she was very spoiled, and very headstrong. She and Gerda got in; and then away they drove over the stumps of felled trees, deeper and deeper into the woods. The little Robber-maiden was as tall as Gerda, but stronger, broader-shouldered, and of dark complexion; her eyes were quite black; they looked almost melancholy. She embraced little Gerda, and said, "They shall not kill you as long as I am not displeased with you. You are, doubtless, a princess?"

"No," said little Gerda; who then related all that had happened to her, and how much she cared about little Kay.

The little Robber-maiden looked at her with a serious air, nodded her head slightly, and said, "They shall not kill you, even if I am angry with you: then I will do it myself;" and she dried Gerda's eyes, and put both her hands in the handsome muff, which was so soft and warm.

At length the carriage stopped. They were in the midst of the court-yard of a robber's castle. It was full of cracks from top to bottom; and out of the openings magpies and rooks were flying; and the great bull dogs, each of which looked as if he could swallow a man, jumped up, but they did not bark, for that was forbidden.

In the midst of the large, old, smoking hall burnt a great fire on the stone floor. The smoke disappeared under the stones, and had to seek its own egress. In an immense cauldron soup was boiling; and rabbits and hares were being roasted on a spit.

"You shall sleep with me to-night, with all my animals," said the little Robber-maiden. They had something to eat and drink; and then went into a corner, where straw and carpets were lying. Beside them, on laths and perches, sat nearly a hundred pigeons, all asleep, seemingly; but yet they

moved a little when the Robber-maiden came. "They are all mine," said she; at the same time seizing one that was next her by the legs, and shaking it so that its wings fluttered. "Kiss it!" cried the little girl, and flung the pigeon in Gerda's face. "Up there is the rabble of the wood," continued she, pointing to several laths which were fastened before a hole high up in the wall; "that's the rabble; they would all fly away immediately, if they were not well fastened in. And here is my dear old Bac;" and she laid hold of the horns of a reindeer, that had a bright copper ring round its neck, and was tethered to the spot. "We are obliged to lock this fellow in, too, or he would make his escape. Every evening I tickle his neck with my sharp knife; he is so frightened at it!" and the little girl drew forth a long knife from a crack in the wall, and let it glide over the reindeer's neck. The poor animal kicked; the girl laughed, and pulled Gerda into bed with her.

"Do you intend to keep your knife while you sleep?" asked Gerda, looking at it rather fearfully.

"I always sleep with the knife," said the little Robber-maiden: "there is no knowing what may happen. But tell me now, once more, all about little Kay; and why you have started off in the wide world alone." And Gerda related all, from the very beginning: the Wood-pigeons cooed above in their cage, and the others slept. The little Robber-maiden wound her arm round Gerda's neck, held the knife in the other hand, and snored so loud that everybody could hear her; but Gerda could not close her eyes, for she did not know whether she was to live or die. The Robbers sat round the fire, sang and drank; and the old female Robber jumped about so, that it was dreadful for Gerda to see her.

Then the Wood-pigeons said, "Coo! coo! we have seen little Kay! A white hen carries his sledge; he himself sat in the carriage of the Snow-Queen, who passed here, down just over the wood, as we lay in our nest. She blew upon us young ones, and all died except we two. Coo! coo!"

"What is that you say up there?" cried little Gerda. "Where did the Snow-Queen go to? Do you know anything about it?"

"She is no doubt gone to Lapland; for there are always snow and ice there. Only ask the Reindeer, who is tethered here."

"Aye, ice and snow indeed! There it is glorious and beautiful!" said the Reindeer. "One can spring about in the large, shining valleys! The Snow-Queen has her summer-tent there; but her fixed abode is high up towards the North Pole, on the island called Spitzbergen."

"O Kay! poor little Kay!" sighed Gerda.

"Do you choose to be quiet?" said the Robber-maiden. "If you don't, I shall make you."

In the morning Gerda told her all that the Wood-pigeons had said; and the little maiden looked very serious, but she nodded her head, and said, "That's no matter — that's no matter. Do you know where Lapland lies?" asked she of the Reindeer.

"Who should know better than I?" said the animal; and his eyes rolled in his head. "I was born and bred there; there I leapt about on the fields of snow."

"Listen," said the Robber-maiden to Gerda. "You see that the men are gone; but my mother is still here, and will remain. However, towards morning she takes a draught out of the large flask, and then she sleeps a little: then I will do something for you." She now jumped out of bed, flew to her mother; with her arms round her neck, and pulling her by the beard, said, "Good-morrow, my own sweet nanny-goat of a mother." And her mother took hold of her nose, and pinched it till it was red and blue; but this was all done out of pure love.

When the mother had taken a sup at her flask, and was having a nap, the little Robber-maiden went to the Reindeer, and said, "I should very much like to give you still many a tickling with the sharp knife, for then you are so amusing; however, I will untether you, and help you out, so that you may get back to Lapland. But you must make good use of your legs; and take this little girl for me to the palace of the Snow-Queen, where her playfellow is. You have heard, I suppose, all she said; for she spoke loud enough, and you were listening."

The Reindeer gave a bound for joy. The Robber-maiden lifted up little Gerda, and took the precaution to bind her fast on the Reindeer's back; she even gave her a small cushion to sit on. "Here are your worsted leggins, for it will be cold; but the muff I shall keep for myself, for it is so very pretty. But I do not wish you to be cold. Here is a pair of lined gloves of my mother's; they just reach up to your elbow. On with them! Now you look about the hands just like my ugly old mother!"

And Gerda wept for joy.

"I can't bear to see you fretting," said the little Robber-maiden. "This is just the time when you ought to look pleased. Here are two loaves and a ham for you, so that you won't starve." The bread and the meat were fastened to the Reindeer's back; the little maiden opened the door, called in all the dogs, and then with her knife cut the rope that fastened the animal, and said to him, "Now off with you; but take good care of the little girl!"

And Gerda stretched out her hands with the large wadded gloves toward the Robber-maiden, and said, "Farewell!" and the Reindeer flew on over bush and bramble, through the great wood, over moor and heath, as fast as he could go.

"Ddsa! ddsa!" was heard in the sky. It was just as if somebody was sneezing.

"These are my old northern lights," said the Reindeer; "look how they gleam!" And on he now sped still quicker, — day and night on he went: the loaves were consumed, and the ham too; and now they were in Lapland.

SIXTH STORY.

The Lapland Woman and the Finland Woman.

Suddenly they stopped before a little house, which looked very miserable: the roof reached to the ground, and the door was so low, that the family was obliged to creep upon their stomachs when they went in or out. Nobody was at home except an old Lapland woman, who was dressing fish by the light of an oil lamp. And the Reindeer told her the whole of Gerda's history, but first of all, his own; for that seemed to him of much greater importance. Gerda was so chilled that she could not speak.

"Poor thing," said the Lapland woman, "you have far to run still. You have more than a hundred miles to go before you get to Finland; there the Snow-Queen has her country-house, and burns blue lights every evening. I will give you a few words from me, which I will write on a dried haberdine, for paper I have none; this you can take with you to the Finland woman, and she will be able to give you more information than I can."

When Gerda had warmed herself, and had eaten and drunk, the Lapland woman wrote a few words on a dried haberdine, begged Gerda to take care of them, put her on the Reindeer, bound her fast, and away sprang the animal. "Ddsa!

ddsa!" was again heard in the air; the most charming blue lights burned the whole night in the sky, and at last they came to Finland. They knocked at the chimney of the Finland woman; for as to a door, she had none.

There was such a heat inside that the Finland woman herself went about almost naked. She was diminutive and dirty. She immediately loosened little Gerda's clothes, pulled off her thick gloves and boots; for otherwise the heat would have been too great; and after laying a piece of ice on the Reindeer's head, read what was written on the fish-skin. She read it three times; she then knew it by heart; so she put the fish into the cupboard, — for it might very well be eaten, and she never threw anything away.

Then the Reindeer related his own story first, and afterwards that of little Gerda; and the Finland woman winked her eyes, but said nothing.

"You are so clever," said the Reindeer: "you can, I know, twist all the winds of the world together in a knot. If the seaman loosens one knot, then he has a good wind; if a second, then it blows pretty stiffly; if he undoes the third and fourth, then it rages so that the forests are upturned. Will you give the little maiden a potion, that she may possess the strength of twelve men, and vanquish the Snow-Queen?"

"The strength of twelve men!" said the Finland woman; "much good that would be!" Then she went to a cupboard, and drew out a large skin rolled up. When she had unrolled it, strange characters were to be seen written thereon; and the Finland woman read at such a rate, that the perspiration trickled down her forehead. But the Reindeer begged so hard for little Gerda, and Gerda looked so imploringly with tearful eyes at the Finland woman, that she winked and drew the Reindeer aside into a corner, where they whispered together, while the animal got some fresh ice put on his head.

"'Tis true little Kay is at the Snow-Queen's and finds everything there quite to his taste; and he thinks it the very best place in the world: but the reason of that is, he has a splinter of glass in his eye and in his heart. These must be got out first; otherwise he will never go back to mankind, and the Snow-Queen will retain her power over him."

"But can you give little Gerda nothing to take which will endue her with power over the whole?"

"I can give her no more power than what she has already. Don't you see how great it is? Don't you see how men and animals are forced to serve her; how well she gets through the world barefooted? She must not hear of her power from us: that power lies in her heart, because she is a sweet and innocent child! If she cannot get to the Snow-Queen by herself, and rid little Kay of the glass, we cannot help her. Two miles hence the garden of the Snow-Queen begins; thither you may carry the little girl. Set her down by the large bush with red berries, standing in the snow; don't stay talking, but hasten back as fast as possible." And now the Finland woman placed little Gerda on the Reindeer's back, and off he ran with all imaginable speed.

"O! I have not got my boots! I have not brought my gloves!" cried little Gerda. She remarked she was without them from the cutting frost; but the Reindeer dared not stand still; on he ran till he came to the great bush with the red berries; and there he set Gerda down, kissed her mouth, while large, bright tears flowed from the animal's eyes, and then back he went as fast as possible. There stood poor Gerda now, without shoes or gloves, in the very middle of dreadful, icy Finland.

She ran on as fast as she could. There then came a whole regiment of snow-flakes, but they did not fall from above, and they were quite bright and shining from the Aurora Borealis. The flakes ran along the ground, and the nearer they came the larger they grew. Gerda well remembered how large and strange the snow-flakes appeared when she once saw them through a magnifying-glass; but now they were large and terrific in another manner — they were all alive. They were the outposts of the Snow-Queen. They had the most wondrous shapes; some looked like large ugly porcupines; others like snakes knotted together, with their heads sticking out; and others, again, like small fat bears, with the hair standing on end: all were of dazzling whiteness — all were living snow-flakes.

Little Gerda repeated the Lord's Prayer. The cold was

so intense that she could see her own breath, which came like smoke out of her mouth. It grew thicker and thicker, and took the form of little angels, that grew more and more when they touched the earth. All had helms on their heads, and lances and shields in their hands; they increased in numbers; and when Gerda had finished the Lord's Prayer, she was surrounded by a whole legion. They thrust at the horrid snow-flakes with their spears, so that they flew into a thousand pieces; and little Gerda walked on bravely and in security. The angels patted her hands and feet; and then she felt the cold less, and went on quickly towards the palace of the Snow Queen.

But now we shall see how Kay fared. He never thought of Gerda, and least of all that she was standing before the palace.

SEVENTH STORY.

What took place in the Palace of the Snow-Queen, and what happened afterward.

The walls of the palace were of driving snow, and the windows and doors of cutting winds. There were more than a hundred halls there, according as the snow was driven by

the winds. The largest was many miles in extent; all were lighted up by the powerful Aurora Borealis, and all were so large, so empty, so icy cold, and so resplendent! Mirth never reigned there; there was never even a little bear-ball, with the storm for music, while the polar bears went on their hind-legs and showed off their steps. Never a little tea-party of white young lady foxes; vast, cold, and empty were the halls of the Snow-Queen. The northern lights shone with such precision that one could tell exactly when they were at their highest or lowest degree of brightness. In the middle of the empty, endless hall of snow was a frozen lake; it was cracked in a thousand pieces, but each piece was so like the other, that it seemed the work of a cunning artificer. In the middle of this lake sat the Snow-Queen when she was at home; and then she said she was sitting in the Mirror of Understanding, and that this was the only one and the best thing in the world.

Little Kay was quite blue, yes, nearly black with cold; but he did not observe it, for she had kissed away all feeling of cold from his body, and his heart was a lump of ice. He was dragging along some pointed flat pieces of ice, which he laid together in all possible ways, for he wanted to make something with them; just as we have little flat pieces of wood to make geometrical figures with, called the Chinese Puzzle. Kay made all sorts of figures, the most complicated, for it was an ice-puzzle for the understanding. In his eyes the figures were extraordinarily beautiful, and of the utmost importance; for the bit of glass which was in his eye caused this. He found whole figures which represented a written word; but he never could manage to represent just the word he wanted — that word was "Eternity;" and the Snow-Queen had said, "If you can discover that figure, you shall be your own master, and I will make you a present of the whole world and a pair of new skates." But he could not find it out.

"I am going now to the warm lands," said the Snow-Queen. "I must have a look down into the black cauldrons." It was the volcanoes Vesuvius and Etna that she meant. "I will just give them a coating of white, for that is as it ought

to be; besides, it is good for the oranges and the grapes." And then away she flew, and Kay sat quite alone in the empty halls of ice that were miles long, and looked at the blocks of ice, and thought and thought till his skull was almost cracked. There he sat quite benumbed and motionless; one would have imagined he was frozen to death.

Suddenly little Gerda stepped through the great portal into the palace. The gate was formed of cutting winds; but Gerda repeated her evening prayer, and the winds were laid as though they slept; and the little maiden entered the vast, empty, cold halls. There she beheld Kay: she recognized him, flew to embrace him, and cried out, her arms firmly holding him the while, "Kay, sweet little Kay! Have I then found you at last?"

But he sat quite still, benumbed and cold. Then little Gerda shed burning tears; and they fell on his bosom, they penetrated to his heart, they thawed the lumps of ice, and consumed the splinters of the looking-glass; he looked at her, and she sang the hymn: —

> "The rose in the valley is blooming so sweet,
> The Child Jesus is there the children to greet."

Hereupon Kay burst into tears; he wept so much that the splinter rolled out of his eye, and he recognized her, and shouted, "Gerda, sweet little Gerda! where have you been so long? And where have I been?" He looked round him. "How cold it is here!" said he: "how empty and cold!" And he held fast by Gerda, who laughed and wept for joy It was so beautiful, that even the blocks of ice danced abo for joy; and when they were tired and laid themselves down, they formed exactly the letters which the Snow-Queen had told him to find out; so now he was his own master, and he would have the whole world and a pair of new skates into the bargain.

Gerda kissed his cheeks, and they grew quite blooming; she kissed his eyes, and they shone like her own; she kissed his hands and feet, and he was again well and merry. The Snow-Queen might come back as soon as she liked; there stood his discharge written in resplendent masses of ice.

They took each other by the hand, and wandered forth out of the large hall; they talked of their old grandmother, and of the roses upon the roof; and wherever they went, the winds ceased raging, and the sun burst forth. And when they reached the bush with the red berries, they found the Reindeer waiting for them. He had brought another, a young one, with him, whose udder was filled with milk, which he gave to the little ones, and kissed their lips. They then carried Kay and Gerda, — first to the Finland woman, where they warmed themselves in the warm room, and learned what they were to do on their journey home; and then they went to the Lapland woman, who made some new clothes for them and repaired their sledges.

The Reindeer and the young hind leaped along beside them, and accompanied them to the boundary of the country. Here the first vegetation peeped forth; here Kay and Gerda took leave of the Lapland woman. "Farewell! farewell!" said they all. And the first green buds appeared, the first little birds began to chirrup; and out of the wood came, riding on a magnificent horse which Gerda knew (it was one of the leaders in the golden carriage), a young damsel with a bright red cap on her head, and armed with pistols. It was the little Robber-maiden, who, tired of being at home, had determined to make a journey to the north; and afterwards in another direction, if that did not please her. She recognized Gerda immediately, and Gerda knew her too. It was a joyful meeting.

"You are a fine fellow for tramping about," said she to little Kay; "I should like to know, faith, if you deserve that one should run from one end of the world to the other for your sake!"

But Gerda patted her cheeks, and inquired for the Prince and Princess.

"They are gone abroad," said the other.

"But the Raven?" asked little Gerda.

"O! the Raven is dead," answered she. "His tame sweetheart is a widow, and wears a bit of black worsted round her leg; she laments most piteously, but it's all mere talk and stuff! Now tell me what you've been doing, and how you managed to catch him."

And Gerda and Kay both told her their story.

And "Schnipp-schnapp-schnurre-basselurre," said the Robber-maiden; and she took the hands of each, and promised that if she should some day pass through the town where they lived, she would come and visit them; and then away she rode. Kay and Gerda took each other's hand: it was lovely spring weather, with abundance of flowers and of verdure. The church-bells rang, and the children recognized the high towers, and the large town; it was that in which they dwelt. They entered, and hastened up to their grandmother's room, where everything was standing as formerly. The clock said "Tick! tack!" and the finger moved round; but as they entered, they remarked that they were now grown up. The roses on the leads hung blooming in at the open window; there stood the little children's chairs, and Kay and Gerda sat down on them, holding each other by the hand; they both had forgotten the cold, empty splendor of the Snow-Queen, as though it had been a dream. The grandmother sat in the bright sunshine, and read aloud from the Bible: "Unless ye become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven."

And Kay and Gerda looked in each other's eyes, and all at once they understood the old hymn: —

> "The rose in the valley is blooming so sweet,
> The Child Jesus is there the children to greet."

There sat the two grown-up persons; grown-up, and yet children; children at least in heart: and it was summer-time; summer, glorious summer!

PEN AND INKSTAND.

THE following remark was made in a poet's room, as the speaker looked at the inkstand that stood upon his table: —

"It is marvelous all that can come out of that inkstand! What will it produce next? Yes, it is marvelous!"

"So it is!" exclaimed the Inkstand. "It is incomprehensible! That is what I always say." It was thus the Inkstand addressed itself to the Pen, and to everything else that could hear it on the table. "It is really astonishing all that can come from me! It is almost incredible! I positively do not know myself what the next thing may be, when a person begins to dip into me. One drop of me serves for half a side of paper; and what may not then appear upon it? I am certainly something extraordinary. From me proceed all the works of the poets. These animated beings, whom people think they recognize, — these deep feelings, that gay humor, these charming descriptions of nature, — I do not understand them myself, for I know nothing about nature; but still it is all in me. From me have gone forth, and still go forth, these warrior hosts, these lovely maidens, these bold knights on snorting steeds, those droll characters in humbler life. The fact is, however, that I do not know anything about them myself. I assure you they are not my ideas."

"You are right there," replied the Pen. "You have few ideas, and do not trouble yourself much with thinking. If you *did* exert yourself to think, you would perceive that you ought to give something that was not dry. You supply me with the means of committing to paper what I have in me; I write with that. It is the pen that writes. Mankind do not doubt that; and most men have about as much genius for poetry as an old inkstand."

"You have but little experience," said the Inkstand. "You have scarcely been a week in use, and you are already half worn out. Do you fancy that you are a poet? You are only a servant; and I have had many of your kind before you

came — many of the goose family, and of English manufacture. I know both quill pens and steel pens. I have had a great many in my service, and I shall have many more still, when he, the man who stirs me up, comes and puts down what he takes from me. I should like very much to know what will be the next thing he will take from me."

"Ink-tub!" said the Pen.

Late in the evening the Poet returned home. He had been at a concert, had heard a celebrated violin player, and was quite enchanted with his wonderful performance. It had been a complete gush of melody that he had drawn from the instrument. Sometimes it seemed like the gentle murmur of a rippling stream, sometimes like the singing of birds, sometimes like the tempest sweeping through the mighty pine forests. He fancied he heard his own heart weep, but in the sweet tones that can be heard in a woman's charming voice. It seemed as if not only the strings of the violin made music, but its bridge, its pegs, and its sounding-board. It was astonishing! The piece had been a most difficult one; but it seemed like play — as if the bow were but wandering capriciously over the strings. Such was the appearance of facility, that every one might have supposed he could do it. The violin seemed to sound of itself, the bow to play of itself. These two seemed to do it all. One forgot the master who guided them, who gave them life and soul. Yes, they forgot the master; but the Poet thought of him. He named him, and wrote down his thoughts as follows: —

"How foolish it would be of the violin and the bow, were they to be vain of their performance! And yet this is what so often we of the human species are. Poets, artists, thos who make discoveries in science, military and naval commanders, — we are all proud of ourselves; and yet we are all only the instruments in our Lord's hands. To Him alone be the glory! We have nothing to arrogate to ourselves."

This was what the Poet wrote; and he headed it with, "The Master and the Instruments."

"Well, madam," said the Pen to the Inkstand when they were again alone, "you heard him read aloud what I had writt n."

"Yes, what I gave you to write," said the Inkstand. "It was a hit at you for your conceit. Strange that you cannot see that people make a fool of you! I gave you that hit pretty cleverly. I confess, though, it was rather malicious."

"Ink-holder!" cried the Pen.

"Writing-stick!" cried the Inkstand.

They both felt assured that they had answered well; and it is a pleasant reflection that one has made a smart reply — one sleeps comfortably after it. And they both went to sleep; but the Poet could not sleep. His thoughts welled forth like the tones from the violin, trilling like pearls, rushing like a storm through the forest. He recognized the feelings of his own heart — he perceived the gleam from the everlasting Master.

To Him alone be the glory!

LITTLE CLAUS AND BIG CLAUS.

THERE lived in a village two men who both had the same name; they were called Claus; but one of them had four horses, and the other had only one horse; so in order to tell one from the other, people called the owner of the four horses, "Big Claus," and him who had only one, "Little Claus." Now we shall hear what happened to the two, for this is a true story.

The whole week through, Little Claus was obliged to plough for Big Claus, and lend him his one horse; and, in return, Big Claus lent him all his four horses, but only on one day of the week, and that was Sunday. Then how proudly Little Claus would smack his whip over all five horses! they were as good as his own on that one day. The sun shone brightly, and all the bells in the church tower were ringing merrily as the people passed by, dressed in their best clothes, with their prayer-books under their arms. They were going to hear the clergyman preach, and they looked at Little Claus ploughing with his five horses, and he was so proud that he smacked his whip, and said, "G'up, all my horses!"

"You must not say that," said Big Claus; "for only one of them belongs to you." But when another lot of people went by to church, Little Claus forgot what he ought to say, and called out, "G'up, all my horses!"

"Now I tell you not to say that again," said Big Claus;

"for if you do, I shall hit your horse on the head, so that he will drop dead on the spot, and that will be the end of him."

"I promise you I will not say it any more," said the other; but as soon as people came by, nodding to him, and wishing him "Good day," he became so pleased, and thought how grand it looked to have five horses ploughing in his field, that he cried out again, "G'up, all my horses!"

"I'll g'up your horses for you," said Big Claus; and, seizing a carriage weight, he struck the one horse of Little Claus on the head, and he fell dead instantly.

"Ah! now I have no horse at all," said Little Claus, and he began to weep. But after a while he took off the dead horse's skin, and hung the hide to dry in the wind. Then he put the dry skin into a bag, and, placing it over his shoulder, went out into the next town to sell the horse's hide.

He had a very long way to go, and had to pass through a dark, gloomy forest. Presently a storm arose, and he lost his way, and before he discovered the right path, evening came on, and it was still a long way to the town, and too far to return home before night.

Near the road stood a large farm-house. The shutters outside the windows were closed, but lights shone through the crevices and at the top. "I might get permission to stay here for the night," thought Little Claus; so he went up to the door and knocked.

The Farmer's wife opened the door; but when she heard what he wanted, she told him to go away, as her husband would not allow her to admit strangers.

"Then I shall be obliged to lie out here," said Little Claus to himself, and the Farmer's wife shut the door in his face.

Near to the farm-house stood a large hay-stack, and between it and the house was a small shed, with a thatched roof.

"I can lie up there," said Little Claus, as he saw the roof; "it will make a famous bed, but I hope the stork will not fly down and bite my legs;" for on it stood a living stork, whose nest was in the roof.

So Little Claus climbed to the roof of the shed, and while he turned himself to get comfortable, he discovered that the wooden shutters, which were closed, did not reach to the tops

of the windows of the farm-house, so that he could see into a room in which a large table was laid out, with wine, roast meat, and a splendid fish. The Farmer's wife and the Sexton were sitting at the table together; and she filled his glass, and helped him plenteously to fish, for that was something he was fond of.

"If I could only get some, too," thought Little Claus; and he stretched his neck toward the window. O, what a lovely pie he could see there! O, but that was a feast!

Now he heard some one riding down the road, toward the farm-house. It was the woman's husband coming home. He was a good man, but still he had a very strange prejudice, — he could not bear the sight of a sexton. If one appeared before him, he would put himself in a terrible rage. And so it was that the Sexton had gone to visit the Farmer's wife during her husband's absence from home, and the good woman had placed before him the best she had in the house to eat. When she heard the Farmer coming she was frightened, and begged the Sexton to hide himself in a large empty chest that stood in the room. He did so, for he knew her husband could not endure the sight of a sexton. The woman then quickly put away the wine, and hid all the rest of the nice things in the oven; for if her husband had seen them he would have asked what they were brought out for.

"O dear!" sighed Little Claus from the top of the shed, as he saw all the good things disappear.

"Is any one up there?" asked the Farmer, looking up and discovering Little Claus. "Why are you lying up there? Come down, and come into the house with me." So Little Claus came down and told the Farmer how he had lost his way, and begged for a night's lodging.

"All right," said the Farmer; "but we must have something to eat first."

The woman received them both very kindly, laid the cloth on a large table, and placed before them a dish of groats. The Farmer was very hungry, and ate his groats with a good appetite, but Little Claus could not help thinking of the nice roast meat, fish, and pies, which he knew were in the oven. Under the table, at his feet, lay the sack containing the horse's

skin, which he intended to sell at the next town. Now Little Claus did not relish the groats at all, so he trod with his foot on the sack under the table, and the dry skin squeaked quite loud. "Hush!" said Little Claus to his sack, at the same time treading upon it again, till it squeaked louder than before.

"Hallo! what have you got in your sack?" asked the Farmer.

"O, it is a conjuror," said Little Claus; "and he says we need not eat groats, for he has conjured the oven full of roast meat, fish, and pie."

"Wonderful!" cried the Farmer, and he opened the oven door; and there lay all the nice things hidden by the Farmer's wife, but which he supposed had been conjured there by the wizard under the table. The woman dared not say anything; so she placed the things before them, and they both ate of the fish, the meat, and the pastry.

Then Little Claus trod again upon his sack, and it squeaked as before.

"What does he say now?" asked the Farmer.

"He says," replied Little Claus, "that there are three bottles of wine for us, standing in the corner, by the oven."

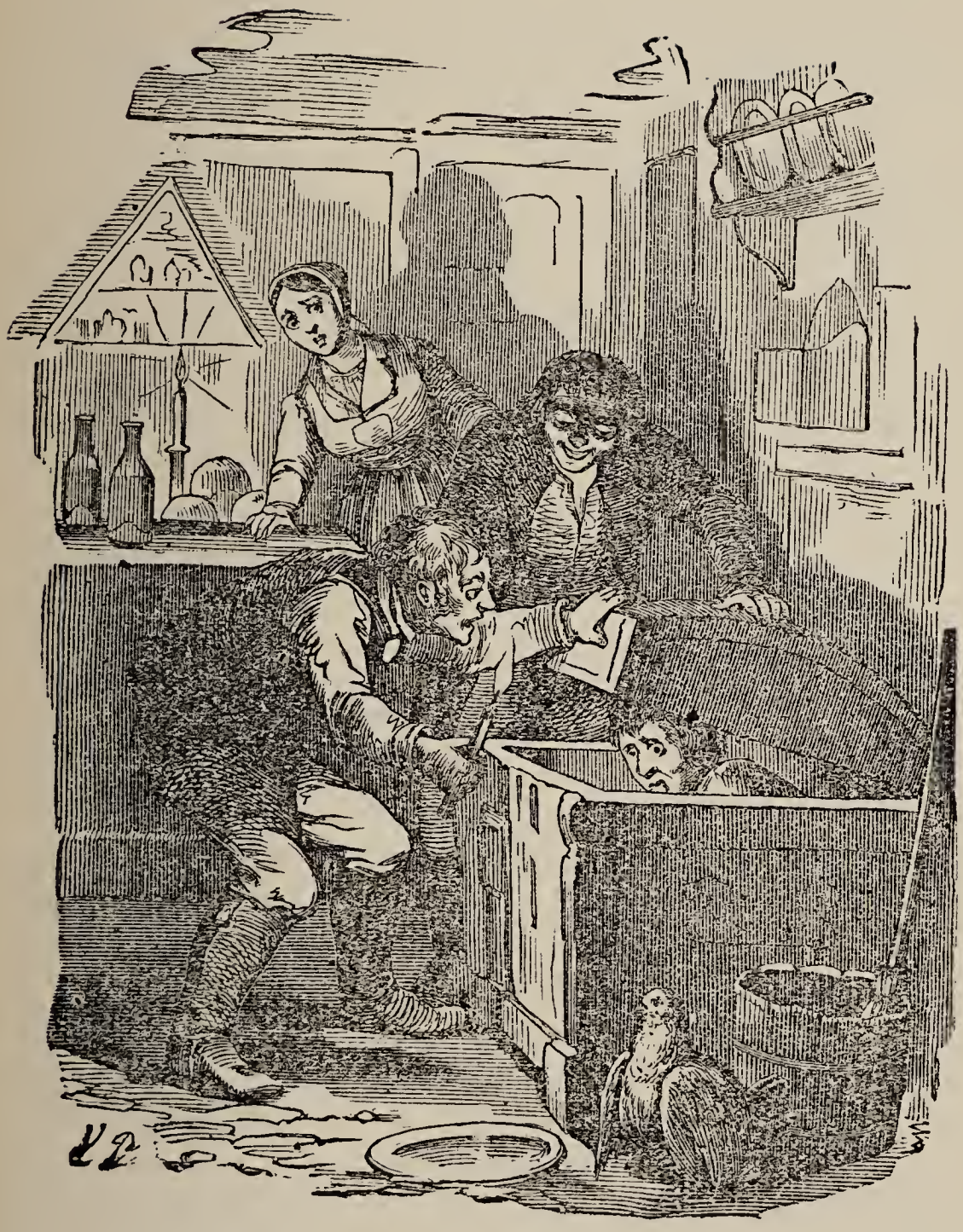
So the woman was obliged to bring out the wine also, which she had hidden, and the Farmer drank it till he became quite merry. He would have liked such a conjuror as Little Claus carried in his sack. "Could he conjure up the devil?" asked the Farmer. "I should like to see him now, while I am so merry."

"O, yes!" replied Little Claus, "my conjuror can do anything I ask him,—can you not?" he asked, treading at the same time on the sack till it squeaked. "Do you hear? he answers 'Yes,' but he fears that we shall not like to look at him."

"O, I am not afraid. What will he be like?"

"Well, he is very much like a sexton."

"Ha!" said the Farmer; "then he must be ugly. Do you know I cannot endure the sight of a sexton. However, that doesn't matter, I shall know who it is; so I shall not mind. Now then, I have got up my courage, but don't let him come too near me."



"Stop, I must ask the conjuror," said Little Claus; so he trod on the bag, and stooped his ear down to listen.

"What does he say?"

"He says that you must go and open that large chest which stands in the corner, and you will see the devil crouching down inside; but you must hold the lid firmly, that he may not slip out."

"Will you come and help me hold it?" said the Farmer, going toward the chest in which his wife had hidden the Sexton, who now lay inside, very much frightened. The Farmer lifted the lid a very little way, and peeped in.

"Eh!" cried he, springing backwards. "Ah, I saw him, and he is exactly like our sexton. How dreadful it is!" So after that he was obliged to drink again, and they sat and drank till far into the night.

"You must sell your conjuror to me," said the Farmer; "ask as much as you like, I will pay it; indeed, I would give you directly a whole bushel of gold."

"No, indeed, I cannot," said Little Claus; "only think how much profit I could make out of this conjuror."

"But I should like to have him," said the Farmer, still continuing his entreaties.

"Well," said Little Claus at length, "you have been so good as to give me a night's lodging, I will not refuse you; you shall have the conjuror for a bushel of money, but I will have quite full measure."

"So you shall," said the Farmer; "but you must take away the chest as well. I would not have it in the house another hour; there is no knowing if *he* may not be still there."

So Little Claus gave the Farmer the sack containing the dried horse's skin, and received in exchange a bushel of money — full measure. The Farmer also gave him a wheelbarrow on which to carry away the chest and the gold.

"Farewell," said Little Claus, as he went off with his money and the great chest, in which the sexton lay still concealed. On one side of the forest was a broad, deep river; the water flowed so rapidly that very few were able to swim against the stream. A new bridge had lately been built across it, and in the middle of this bridge Little Claus stopped, and said, loud enough to be heard by the Sexton, —

"Now, what shall I do with this stupid chest? it is as heavy as if it were full of stones: I shall be tired if I roll it any farther, so I may as well throw it into the river; if it swims after me to my house, well and good, and if not, it will not much matter."

So he seized the chest in his hand, and lifted it up a little, as if he were going to throw it into the water.

"No, leave it alone," cried the Sexton from within the chest; "let me out first."

"O," exclaimed Little Claus, pretending to be frightened, "he is in there still, is he? I must throw him into the river, that he may be drowned."

"O no! O no!" cried the Sexton; "I will give you a whole bushel full of money if you will let me go."

"Why, that is another matter," said Little Claus, opening the chest. The Sexton crept out, pushed the empty chest into the water, and went to his house; then he measured out a whole bushel full of gold for Little Claus, who had already received one from the Farmer, so that now he had a barrow full.

"I have been well paid for my horse," said he to himself when he reached home, entered his own room, and emptied all his money into a heap on the floor. "How vexed Big Claus will be when he finds how rich I have become all through my one horse; but I shall not tell him exactly how it all happened." Then he sent a boy to Big Claus to borrow a bushel measure.

"What can he want it for?" thought Big Claus; so he smeared the bottom of the measure with tar, that some of whatever was put into it might stick there and remain. And so it happened; for when the measure returned, three new silver florins were sticking to it.

"What does this mean?" said Big Claus; so he ran off directly to Little Claus, and asked, "Where did you get so much money?"

"O, for my horse's hide; I sold it yesterday."

"It was certainly well paid for then," said Big Claus; and he ran home to his house, seized a hatchet, and knocked all his four horses on the head, flayed off their skins, and took them to the town to sell. "Hides, hides! who'll buy hides?"

he cried, as he went through the streets. All the shoemakers and tanners came running, and asked how much he wanted for them.

"A bushel of money, for each," replied Big Claus.

"Are you mad?" they all cried; "do you think we have money to spend by the bushel?"

"Hides, hides!" he cried again, "who'll buy hides?" but to all who inquired the price, his answer was, "A bushel of money."

"He is making fools of us," said they all; then the shoemakers took their straps, and the tanners their leather aprons, and began to beat Big Claus.

"Hides, hides!" they cried, mocking him; "yes, we'll mark your hide for you, till it is black and blue."

"Out of the town with him," said they. And Big Claus was obliged to run as fast as he could; he had never before been so thoroughly beaten.

"Ah," said he, as he came to his house, "Little Claus shall pay me for this; I will beat him to death."

Now it happened that the old grandmother of Little Claus died. She had been cross, unkind, and really spiteful to him; but he was very sorry, and took the dead woman and laid her in his warm bed to see if he could bring her to life again. There he determined that she should lie the whole night, while he seated himself in a chair in a corner of the room, as he had often done before.

During the night, as he sat there, the door opened, and in came Big Claus with a hatchet. He knew well where Little Claus's bed stood; so he went right up to it, and struck the old grandmother on the head, thinking it must be Little Claus.

"There," cried he, "now you cannot make a fool of me again;" and then he went home.

"That is a very wicked man," thought Little Claus; "he meant to kill me. It is a good thing for my old grandmother that she was already dead, or he would have taken her life."

Then he dressed his old grandmother in her best clothes, borrowed a horse of his neighbor, and harnessed it to a cart. Then he placed the old woman on the back seat, so that she

might not fall out as he drove, and rode away through the wood. By sunrise they reached a large inn, where Little Claus stopped and went to get something to eat.

The landlord was a rich man, and a good man too; but as passionate as if he had been made of pepper and snuff.

"Good morning," said he to Little Claus; "you are come betimes to-day."

"Yes," said Little Claus; "I am going to the town with my old grandmother; she is sitting at the back of the wagon, but I cannot bring her into the room. Will you take her a glass of mead? but you must speak very loud, for she cannot hear well."

"Yes, certainly I will," replied the Landlord; and, pouring out a glass of mead, he carried it out to the dead grandmother, who sat upright in the cart.

"Here is a glass of mead from your grandson," said the Landlord. The dead woman did not answer a word, but sat quite still.

"Do you not hear?" cried the Landlord, as loud as he could; "here is a glass of mead from your grandson."

Again and again he bawled it out, but as she did not stir he flew into a passion, and threw the glass of mead in her face; it struck her on the nose, and she fell backwards out of the cart, for she was only seated there, not tied in.

"Mercy!" cried Little Claus, and sprang out of the door, and seized hold of the Landlord by the throat; "you have killed my grandmother; see, here is a great hole in her forehead."

"O how unfortunate," said the Landlord, wringing his hands. "This all comes of my fiery temper. Dear Little Claus, I will give you a whole bushel of money, and will bury your grandmother as if she were my own; only keep silent, or else they will cut off my head, and that would be disagreeable."

So it happened that Little Claus received another bushel of money, and the Landlord buried his old grandmother as if she had been his own.

When now Little Claus reached home again, he immediately sent a boy to Big Claus, requesting him to lend him a bushel

measure. "How is this?" thought Big Claus; "did I not kill him? I must go and see for myself." So he went to Little Claus, and took the bushel measure with him. "How did you get all this money?" asked Big Claus, staring with wide open eyes at his neighbor's treasures.

"You killed my grandmother instead of me," said Little Claus, "so I have sold her for a bushel of money."

"That is a good price any way," said Big Claus. So he went home, took a hatchet, and killed his old grandmother with one blow. Then he placed her on a cart, and drove into the town to the apothecary, and asked him if he would buy a dead body.

"Whose is it, and where did you get it?" asked the Apothecary.

"It is my grandmother," he replied; "I struck her dead for a bushel of money."

"Heaven preserve us!" cried the Apothecary, "you are out of your mind. Don't say such things, or you will lose your head." And then he talked to him seriously about the wicked deed he had done, and told him that such a wicked man would surely be punished. Big Claus got so frightened that he rushed out of the apothecary shop, jumped into the cart, whipped up his horses, and drove home quickly. The Apothecary and all the people thought him mad, and let him drive where he liked.

"You shall pay for this," said Big Claus, as soon as he got into the high-road, — "that you shall, Little Claus." So as soon as he reached home he took the largest sack he could find, and went over to Little Claus. "You have played me another trick," said he. "First, I killed all my horses, and then my old grandmother, and it is all your fault; but you shall not make a fool of me any more." So he laid hold of Little Claus round the body, and pushed him into the sack, which he took on his shoulders, saying, "Now I'm going to drown you in the river."

He had a long way to go before he reached the river, and Little Claus was not a very light weight to carry. The road led by the church, and as they passed he could hear the organ playing and the people singing beautifully. Big Claus put

down the sack close to the church door, and thought he might as well go in and hear a psalm before he went any further. Little Claus could not possibly get out of the sack, and all the people were in church ; so in he went.

"O dear, O dear," sighed Little Claus in the sack, as he turned and twisted about ; but he found he could not loosen the string with which it was tied. Presently an old cattle driver, with snowy hair, passed by, carrying a large staff in his hand, with which he drove a large herd of cows and oxen before him. They stumbled against the sack in which lay Little Claus, and turned it over. "O dear," sighed Little Claus, "I am so young, and going so soon to heaven."

"And I, poor fellow," said the drover, — "I, who am so old already, cannot get there."

"Open the sack," cried Little Claus ; "creep into it instead of me, and you will soon be there."

"With all my heart," replied the drover, opening the sack, from which sprung Little Claus as quickly as possible. "Will you take care of my cattle?" said the old man, as he crept into the bag.

"Yes," said Little Claus, and he tied up the sack, and then walked off with all the cows and oxen.

When Big Claus came out of church, he took up the sack, and placed it on his shoulders. It appeared to have become lighter, for the old drover was not half so heavy as Little Claus.

"How light he seems now," said he. "Ah, it is because I have been to a church." So he walked on to the river, which was deep and broad, and threw the sack containing the old drover into the water, believing it to be Little Claus. "There you may lie!" he exclaimed ; "you will play me no more tricks now." Then he turned to go home, but when he came to a place where two roads crossed, there was Little Claus driving the cattle. "How is this?" said Big Claus. "Did I not drown you just now?"

"Yes," said Little Claus ; "you threw me into the river about half an hour ago."

"But where ever did you get all these fine beasts?" asked Big Claus.

"These beasts are sea-cattle," replied Little Claus. "I'll tell you the whole story, and thank you for drowning me; I am above you now; I am really very rich. I was frightened, to be sure, while I lay tied up in the sack, and the wind whistled in my ears when you threw me into the river from the bridge, and I sank to the bottom immediately; but I did not hurt myself, for I fell upon beautifully soft grass which grows down there; and, in a moment, the sack opened, and the sweetest little maiden came towards me. She had snow-white robes, and a wreath of green leaves on her wet hair. She took me by the hand, and said, 'So you are come, Little Claus, and here are some cattle for you to begin with. About a mile further on the road, there is another herd for you.' Then I saw that the river formed a great highway for the people who live in the sea. They were walking and driving here and there from the sea to the land at the spot where the river terminates. The bed of the river was covered with the loveliest flowers and sweet, fresh grass. The fish swam past me as rapidly as the birds do here in the air. How handsome all the people were, and what fine cattle were grazing on the hills and in the valleys!"

"But why did you come up again," said Big Claus, "if it was all so beautiful down there? I should not have done so."

"Well," said Little Claus, "it was good policy on my part; you heard me say just now that I was told by the sea-maiden to go a mile further on the road, and I should find a whole herd of cattle. By the road she meant the river, for she could not travel any other way; but I knew the winding of the river, and how it bends, sometimes to the right and sometimes to the left, and it seemed a long way, so I chose a shorter one; and, by coming up to the land, and then driving across the fields back again to the river, I shall save half a mile and get all my cattle more quickly."

"What a lucky fellow you are!" exclaimed Big Claus. "Do you think I should get any sea-cattle if I went down to the bottom of the river?"

"Yes, I think so," said Little Claus; "but I cannot carry you there in a sack, you are too heavy. However, if you will go there first, and then creep into a sack, I will throw you in with the greatest pleasure."

"Thank you," said Big Claus; "but remember, if I do not get any sea-cattle down there, I shall come up again and give you a good thrashing."

"No, now, don't be too fierce about it!" said Little Claus, as they walked on towards the river. When they approached it, the cattle, who were very thirsty, saw the stream, and ran down to drink.

"See what a hurry they are in," said Little Claus, "they are longing to get down again."

"Come. Help me, make haste," said Big Claus, "or you'll get beaten." So he crept into a large sack, which had been lying across the back of one of the oxen.

"Put in a stone," said Big Claus, "or I may not sink."

"O, there's not much fear of that," he replied; still he put a large stone into the bag, and then tied it tightly, and gave it a push.

"Plump!" In went Big Claus, and immediately sank to the bottom of the river.

"I'm afraid he will not find any cattle," said Little Claus, and then he drove his own beasts homeward.

THE GIRL WHO TROD UPON BREAD.

YOU have doubtless heard of the girl who trod upon bread, not to soil her pretty shoes, and what evil this brought upon her. The tale is both written and printed.

She was a poor child, but proud and vain. She had a bad disposition, people said. When she was a little more than an infant, it was a pleasure to her to catch flies, to pull off their wings, and so make them creepers entirely. She used, when somewhat older, to take lady-birds and beetles, stick them all upon a pin, then put a large leaf or a piece of paper close to their feet, so that the poor things held fast to it, and turned and twisted in their endeavours to get off the pin.

"Now read, lady-birds!" said little Inger. "See how they turn the paper!"

As she grew older she became worse instead of better; but she was very beautiful, and that was her misfortune. She would have been punished otherwise, and in the long run she was.

"You will bring evil on your own head," said her mother. "As a little child you used often to tear my aprons; I fear that when you are older you will break my heart."

And she did so sure enough.

At length she went into the country to wait on people of distinction. They were as kind to her as if she had been one of their own family; and she was so well dressed that she looked very pretty, and became extremely arrogant.

When she had been a year in service, her employers said to her, —

"You should go and visit your relations, little Inger."

She went, resolved to let them see how fine she had become. When, however, she reached the village, and saw the lads and lasses gossiping together near the pond, and her mother sitting close by on a stone, resting her head against a bundle of firewood which she had picked up in the forest, Inger turned back. She felt ashamed that she who was dressed so smartly should have for her mother such a ragged

creature, one who gathered sticks for her fire. It gave her no concern that she was expected — she was so vexed.

A half year more had passed.

"You must go home some day and see your old parents, little Inger," said the mistress of the house. "Here is a large loaf of white bread — you can carry this to them; they will be rejoiced to see you."

And Inger put on her best clothes and her nice new shoes, and she lifted her dress high, and walked so carefully, that she might not soil her garments or her feet. There was no harm at all in that. But when she came to where the path went over some damp, marshy ground, and there were water and mud in the way, she threw the bread into the mud, in order to step upon it and get over with dry shoes; but just as she had placed one foot on the bread and had lifted the other up, the bread sank in with her deeper and deeper, till she went entirely down, and nothing was to be seen but a black, bubbling pool.

That is the story.

What became of the girl? She went below to the moor woman who brews down there. The Moor Woman is an aunt of the fairies. *They* are very well known. Many poems have been written about them, and they have been printed; but nobody knows anything more of the Moor Woman than that when the meadows and the ground begin to reek in summer, it is the old woman below who is brewing. Into her brewery it was that Inger sank, and no one could hold out very long there. A cesspool is a charming apartment compared with the old moor woman's brewery. Every vessel is redolent of horrible smells, which would make any human being faint, and they are packed closely together and over each other; but even if there were a small space among them which one might creep through, it would be impossible, on account of all the slimy toads and snakes that are always crawling and forcing themselves through. Into this place little Inger sank. All this nauseous mess was so ice-cold that she shivered in every limb. Yes she became stiffer and stiffer. The bread stuck fast to her, and it drew her as an amber bead draws a slender thread.

The Moor Woman was at home. The brewery was that day visited by the devil and his dam, and she was a venomous old creature who was never idle. She never went out without having some needlework with her. She had brought some there. She was sewing running leather to put into the shoes of human beings, so that they should never be at rest. She embroidered lies, and worked up into mischief and discord thoughtless words, that would otherwise have fallen to the ground. Yes, she knew how to sew and embroider, and transfer with a vengeance, that old grandam.

She beheld Inger, put on her spectacles, and looked at her.

"That is a girl with talents," said she. "I shall ask for her as a *souvenir* of my visit here; she may do very well as a statue to ornament my great-grandchildren's antechamber;" and she took her.

It was thus little Inger went to the infernal regions. People do not generally go straight through the air to them: they can go by a roundabout path when they know the way.

It was an antechamber in an infinity. One became giddy there at looking forward, and giddy at looking backward, and there stood a crowd of anxious, pining beings, who were waiting and hoping for the time when the gates of grace should be opened. They would have long to wait. Hideous large, waddling spiders wove thousands of webs over their feet; and these webs were like gins or foot-screws, and held them as fast as chains of iron, and were a cause of disquiet to every soul — a painful annoyance. Misers stood there, and lamented that they had forgotten the keys of their money chests. It would be too tiresome to repeat all the complaints and troubles that were poured forth there. Inger thought it shocking to stand there like a statue: she was, as it were, fastened to the ground by the bread.

"This comes of wishing to have clean shoes," said she to herself. "See how they all stare at me!"

Yes, they did all stare at her; their evil passions glared from their eyes, and spoke, without sound, from the corners of their mouths: they were frightful.

"It must be a pleasure to them to see me," thought little

Inger. "I have a pretty face, and am well dressed;" and she dried her eyes. She had not lost her conceit. She had not then perceived how her fine clothes had been soiled in the brew-house of the Moor Woman. Her dress was covered with dabs of nasty matter; a snake had wound itself among her hair, and it dangled over her neck; and from every fold in her garment peeped out a toad, that puffed like an asthmatic lap-dog. It was very disagreeable. "But all the rest down here look horrid too," was the reflection with which she consoled herself.

But the worst of all was the dreadful hunger she felt. Could she not stoop down and break off a piece of the bread on which she was standing? No; her back was stiffened; her hands and her arms were stiffened; her whole body was like a statue of stone; she could only move her eyes, and these she could turn entirely round, and that was an ugly sight. And flies came and crept over her eyes backward and forward. She winked her eyes; but the intruders did not fly away, for they could not — their wings had been pulled off. That was another misery added to the hunger — the gnawing hunger that was so terrible to bear!

"If this goes on I cannot hold out much longer," she said.

But she had to hold out, and her sufferings became greater.

Then a warm tear fell upon her head. It trickled over her face and her neck, all the way down to the bread. Another tear fell, then many followed. Who was weeping over little Inger? Had she not a mother up yonder on the earth? The tears of anguish which a mother sheds over her erring child always reach it; but they do not comfort the child — they burn, they increase the suffering. And O! this intolerable hunger; yet not to be able to snatch one mouthful of the bread she was treading under foot! She became as thin, as slender, as a reed. Another trial was that she heard distinctly all that was said of her above on the earth, and it was nothing but blame and evil. Though her mother wept, and was in much affliction, she still said, —

"Pride goes before a fall. That was your great fault, Inger. O, how miserable you have made your mother!"

Her mother and all who were acquainted with her were well

aware of the sin she had committed in treading upon bread. They knew that she had sunk into the bog, and was lost; the cowherd had told that, for he had seen it himself from the brow of the hill.

"What affliction you have brought on your mother, Inger!" exclaimed her mother. "Ah, well! I expected no better from you."

"Would that I had never been born!" thought Inger; "that would have been much better for me. My mother's whimpering can do no good now."

She heard how the family, the people of distinction who had been so kind to her, spoke. "She was a wicked child," they said; "she valued not the gifts of our Lord, but trod them under her feet. It will be difficult for her to get the gates of grace open to admit her."

"They ought to have brought me up better," thought Inger. "They should have taken the whims out of me, if I had any."

She heard that there was a common ballad made about her, "the bad girl who trod upon bread, to keep her shoes nicely clean," and this ballad was sung from one end of the country to the other.

"That any one should have to suffer so much for such as that — be punished so severely for such a trifle!" thought Inger. "All these others are punished justly, for no doubt there was a great deal to punish; but ah, how I suffer!"

And her heart became still harder than the substance into which she had been turned.

"No one can be better in such society. I will not grow better here. See how they glare at me."

And her heart became still harder, and she felt a hatred toward all mankind.

"They have a nice story to tell up there now. O, now I suffer!"

She listened, and heard them telling her history as a warning to children, and the little ones called her "ungodly Inger." "She was so naughty," they said, "so very wicked, that she deserved to suffer."

The children always spoke harshly of her. One day, however, that hunger and misery were gnawing her most dread-

fully, and she heard her name mentioned, and her story told to an innocent child — a little girl — she observed that the child burst into tears in her distress for the proud, finely dressed Inger.

"But will she never come up again?" asked the child.

The answer was, —

"She will never come up again."

"But if she will beg pardon, and promise never to be naughty again?"

"But she will *not* beg pardon," they said.

"O, how I wish she would do it!" sobbed the little girl in great distress. "I will give my doll, and my doll's house too, if she may come up! It is so shocking for poor little Inger to be down there!"

These words touched Inger's heart; they seemed almost to make her good. It was the first time any one had said "poor Inger," and had not dwelt upon her faults. An innocent child cried and prayed for her. She was so much affected by this that she felt inclined to weep herself; but she could not, and this was an additional pain.

Years passed on in the earth above; but down where she was there was no change, except that she heard more and more rarely sounds from above, and that she herself was more seldom mentioned. At last one day she heard a sigh, and "Inger, Inger, how miserable you have made me! I foretold that you would!" These were her mother's last words on her death-bed.

And again she heard herself named by her former employers, and her mistress said, —

"Perhaps I may meet you once more, Inger. None know whither they are to go."

But Inger knew full well that her excellent mistress would never come to the place where *she* was.

Time passed on and on, slowly and wretchedly. Then once more Inger heard her name mentioned, and she beheld as it were, directly above her, two clear stars shining. These were two mild eyes that were closing upon earth. So many years had elapsed since a little girl had cried in childish sorrow over "poor Inger," that that child had become an old

woman, whom our Lord was now about to call to Himself. At that hour, when the thoughts and the actions of a whole life stand in review before the parting soul, she remembered how, as a little child, she had wept bitterly on hearing the history of Inger. That time, and those feelings, stood so prominently before the old woman's mind in the hour of death, that she cried with intense emotion, —

"Lord, my God! have not I often, like Inger, trod under foot Thy blessed gifts, and placed no value on them? Have I not often been guilty of pride and vanity in my secret heart? But Thou, in Thy mercy, didst not let me sink; Thou didst hold me up. O, forsake me not in my last hour!"

And the aged woman's eyes closed, and her spirit's eyes opened to what had been formerly invisible: and as Inger had been present in her latest thoughts, she beheld her, and perceived how deep she had been dragged downwards. At that sight the gentle being burst into tears; and in the kingdom of heaven she stood like a child, and wept for the fate of the unfortunate Inger. Her tears and her prayers sounded like an echo down in the hollow form that confined the imprisoned, miserable soul. That soul was overwhelmed with the unexpected love from those realms afar. One of God's angels wept for her! Why was this vouchsafed to her? The tortured spirit gathered, as it were, into one thought all the actions of its life, — all that it had done; and it shook with the violence of its remorse — remorse such as Inger had never felt. Grief became her predominating feeling. She thought that for her the gates of mercy would never open, and as in deep contrition and self-abasement she thought thus, a ray of brightness penetrated into the dismal abyss — a ray more vivid and glorious than the sunbeams which thaw the snow figures that the children make in their gardens. And this ray, more quickly than the snow-flake that falls upon a child's warm mouth can be melted into a drop of water, caused Inger's petrified figure to evaporate, and a little bird arose, following the zigzag course of the ray, up toward the world that mankind inhabit. But it seemed afraid and shy of everything around it; it felt ashamed of itself; and apparently wishing to avoid all living creatures, it sought, in haste, concealment in a dark recess in

a crumbling wall. Here it sat, and it crept into the furthest corner, trembling all over. It could not sing, for it had no voice. For a long time it sat quietly there before it ventured to look out and behold all the beauty around. Yes, it was beauty! The air was so fresh, yet so soft; the moon shone so clearly; the trees and the flowers scented so sweetly; and it was so comfortable where she sat — her feather garb sc clean and nice! How all creation told of love and glory! The grateful thoughts that awoke in the bird's breast she would willingly have poured forth in song, but the power was denied to her. Yes, gladly would she have sung as do the cuckoo and nightingale in spring. Our gracious Lord, who hears the mute worm's hymn of praise, understood the thanksgiving that lifted itself up in the tones of thought, as the psalm floated in David's mind before it resolved itself into words and melody.

As weeks passed on, these unexpressed feelings of gratitude increased. They would surely find a voice some day, with the first stroke of the wing, to perform some good act. Might not this happen?

Now came the holy Christmas festival. The peasants raised a pole close by the old wall, and bound an unthrashed bundle of oats on it, that the birds of the air might also enjoy the Christmas, and have plenty to eat at that time which was held in commemoration of the redemption brought to mankind.

And the sun rose brightly that Christmas morning, and shone upon the oat-sheaf, and upon all the chirping birds that flew around the pole; and from the wall issued a faint twittering. The swelling thoughts had at last found vent, and the low sound was a hymn of joy, as the bird flew forth from its hiding-place.

The winter was an unusually severe one. The waters were frozen thickly over; the birds and the wild animals in the woods had great difficulty in obtaining food. The little bird, that had so recently left its dark solitude, flew about the country roads, and when it found by chance a little corn dropped in the ruts, it would eat only a single grain itself, while it called all the starving sparrows to partake of it. It would

also fly to the villages and towns, and look well about, and where kind hands had strewed crumbs of bread outside the windows for the birds, it would eat only one morsel itself, and give all the rest to the others.

At the end of the winter the bird had found and given away so many crumbs of bread, that the number put together would have weighed as much as the loaf upon which little Inger had trodden in order to save her fine shoes from being soiled; and when she had found and given away the very last crumb, the gray wings of the bird became white, and expanded wonderfully.

"It is flying over the sea!" exclaimed the children who saw the white bird. Now it seemed to dip into the ocean, now it arose into the clear sunshine; it glittered in the air; it disappeared high, high above; and the children said that it had flown up to the sun.

THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES.

MANY years ago there lived an Emperor, who was so excessively fond of grand new clothes that he spent all his money upon them, that he might be very fine. He did not care about his soldiers, nor about the theatre, and only liked to drive out and show his new clothes. He had a coat for every hour of the day; and just as they say of a king, "He is in council," so they always said of him, "The Emperor is in the wardrobe."

In the great city in which he lived it was always very merry; every day came many strangers; one day two rogues came: they gave themselves out as weavers, and declared they could weave the finest stuff any one could imagine. Not only were their colors and patterns, they said, uncommonly beautiful, but the clothes made of the stuff possessed the wonderful quality that they became invisible to any one who was unfit for the office he held, or was incorrigibly stupid.

"Those would be capital clothes!" thought the Emperor. "If I wore those, I should be able to find out what men in my empire are not fit for the places they have; I could tell the

clever from the dunces. Yes, the stuff must be woven for me directly!"

And he gave the two rogues a great deal of cash in hand, that they might begin their work at once.

As for them, they put up two looms, and pretended to be working; but they had nothing at all on their looms. They at once demanded the finest silk and the costliest gold; this they put into their own pockets, and worked at the empty looms till late into the night.

"I should like to know how far they have got on with the stuff," thought the Emperor. But he felt quite uncomfortable when he thought that those who were not fit for their offices could not see it. He believed, indeed, that he had nothing to fear for himself, but yet he preferred first to send some one else to see how matters stood. All the people in the city knew what peculiar power the stuff possessed, and all were anxious to see how bad or how stupid their neighbors were.

"I will send my honest old Minister to the weavers," thought the Emperor. "He can judge best how the stuff looks, for he has sense, and no one understands his office better than he."

Now the good old Minister went out into the hall where the two rogues sat working at the empty looms.

"Mercy on us!" thought the old Minister, and he opened his eyes wide. "I cannot see anything at all!" But he did not say this.

Both the rogues begged him to be so good as to come nearer, and asked if he did not approve of the colors and the pattern. Then they pointed to the empty loom, and the poor old Minister went on opening his eyes; but he could see nothing, for there was nothing to see.

"Mercy!" thought he, "can I indeed be so stupid? I never thought that, and not a soul must know it. Am I not fit for my office? No, it will never do for me to tell that I could not see the stuff."

"Don't you say anything to it?" asked one, as he went on weaving.

"O, it is charming — quite enchanting!" answered the old Minister, as he peered through his spectacles. "What a fine

pattern, and what colors! Yes, I shall tell the Emperor that I am very much pleased with it."

"Well, we are glad of that," said both the weavers; and then they named the colors, and explained the strange pattern. The old Minister listened attentively, that he might be able to repeat it when the Emperor came. And he did so.

Now the rogues asked for more money, and silk and gold, which they declared they wanted for weaving. They put all into their own pockets, and not a thread was put upon the loom; they continued to work at the empty frames as before.

The Emperor soon sent again, dispatching another honest officer of the court, to see how the weaving was going on, and if the stuff would soon be ready. He fared just like the first: he looked and looked, but, as there was nothing to be seen but the empty looms, he could see nothing.

"Is not that a pretty piece of stuff?" asked the two rogues; and they displayed and explained the handsome pattern which was not there at all.

"I am not stupid!" thought the man: "it must be my good office, for which I am not fit. It is funny enough, but I must not let it be noticed." And so he praised the stuff which he did not see, and expressed his pleasure at the beautiful colors and charming pattern. "Yes, it is enchanting," he told the Emperor.

All the people in the town were talking of the gorgeous stuff. The Emperor wished to see it himself while it was still upon the loom. With a whole crowd of chosen men, among whom were also the two honest statesmen who had already been there, he went to the two cunning rogues, who were now weaving with might and main without fibre or thread.

"Is not that splendid?" said the two statesmen, who had already been there once. "Does not your Majesty remark the pattern and the colors?" And they pointed to the empty loom, for they thought that the others could see the stuff.

"What's this?" thought the Emperor. "I can see nothing at all! That is terrible. Am I stupid? Am I not fit to be Emperor? That would be the most dreadful thing that could happen to me. O, it is *very* pretty!" he said aloud. "It has our highest approbation." And he nodded in a con-

tented way, and gazed at the empty loom, for he would not say that he saw nothing. The whole suite whom he had with him looked and looked, and saw nothing, any more than the rest; but, like the Emperor, they said, "That *is* pretty!" and counseled him to wear the splendid new clothes for the first time at the great procession that was presently to take place. "It is splendid, excellent!" went from mouth to mouth. On all sides there seemed to be general rejoicing, and the Emperor gave the rogues the title of Imperial Court Weavers.

The whole night before the morning on which the procession was to take place, the rogues were up, and kept more than sixteen candles burning. The people could see that they were hard at work, completing the Emperor's new clothes. They pretended to take the stuff down from the loom; they made cuts in the air with great scissors; they sewed with needles without thread; and at last they said, "Now the clothes are ready!"

The Emperor came himself with his noblest cavaliers; and the two rogues lifted up one arm as if they were holding something, and said, "See, here are the trousers! here is the coat! here is the cloak!" and so on. "It is as light as a spider's web: one would think one had nothing on; but that is just the beauty of it."

"Yes," said all the cavaliers; but they could not see anything, for nothing was there.

"Will your Imperial Majesty please to condescend to take off your clothes?" said the rogues; "then we will put on you the new clothes here in front of the great mirror."

The Emperor took off his clothes, and the rogues pretended to put on him each new garment as it was ready; and the Emperor turned round and round before the mirror.

"O, how well they look! how capitally they fit!" said all. "What a pattern! what colors! That *is* a splendid dress!"

"They are standing outside with the canopy which is to be borne above your Majesty in the procession!" announced the head Master of the Ceremonies.

"Well, I am ready," replied the Emperor. "Does it not suit me well?" And then he turned again to the mirror, for he wanted it to appear as if he contemplated his adornment with great interest.

The two chamberlains, who were to carry the train, stooped down with their hands toward the floor, just as if they were picking up the mantle; then they pretended to be holding something in the air. They did not dare to let it be noticed that they saw nothing.

So the Emperor went in procession under the rich canopy, and every one in the streets, said, "How incomparable are the Emperor's new clothes! what a train he has to his mantle! how it fits him!" No one would let it be perceived that he could see nothing, for that would have shown that he was not fit for his office, or was very stupid. No clothes of the Emperor's had ever had such a success as these.

"But he has nothing on!" a little child cried out at last.

"Just hear what that innocent says!" said the father: and one whispered to another what the child had said.

"But he has nothing on!" said the whole people at length. That touched the Emperor, for it seemed to him that they were right; but he thought within himself, "I must go through with the procession." And so he held himself a little higher, and the chamberlains held on tighter than ever, and carried the train which did not exist at all.

THE LITTLE SEA-MAID.

FAR out in the sea the water is as blue as the petals of the most beautiful corn-flower, and as clear as the purest glass. But it is very deep, deeper than any cable will sound; many steeples must be placed one above the other to reach from the ground to the surface of the water. And down there live the sea-people.

Now, you must not believe there is nothing down there but the naked sand; no, — the strangest trees and plants grow there, so pliable in their stalks and leaves that at the least motion of the water they move just as if they had life. All fishes, great and small, glide among the twigs, just as here the birds do in the trees. In the deepest spot of all lies the Sea-king's castle: the walls are of coral, and the tall, Gothic windows of the clearest amber; shells form the roof, and they open and shut according as the water flows. It looks lovely, for in each shell lie gleaming pearls, a single one of which would have great value in a queen's diadem.

The Sea-king below there had been a widower for many years, while his old mother kept house for him. She was a clever woman, but proud of her rank, so she wore twelve oysters on her tail, while the other great people were only allowed to wear six. Beyond this she was deserving of great

praise, especially because she was very fond of her granddaughters, the little Sea-princesses. These were six pretty children; but the youngest was the most beautiful of all. Her skin was as clear and as fine as a rose leaf; her eyes were as blue as the deepest sea; but, like all the rest, she had no feet, for her body ended in a fish-tail.

All day long they could play in the castle, down in the halls, where living flowers grew out of the walls. The great amber windows were opened, and then the fishes swam in to them, just as the swallows fly in to us when we open our windows; but the fishes swam straight up to the Princesses, ate out of their hands, and let themselves be stroked.

Outside the castle was a great garden with bright red and dark blue flowers; the fruit glowed like gold, and the flowers like flames of fire; and they continually kept moving their stalks and leaves. The earth itself was the finest sand, but blue as the flame of brimstone. A peculiar blue radiance lay upon everything down there: one would have thought oneself high in the air, with the canopy of heaven above and around, rather than at the bottom of the deep sea. During a calm the sun could be seen; it appeared like a purple flower, from which all light streamed out.

Each of the little Princesses had her own little place in the garden, where she might dig and plant at her good pleasure. One gave her flower-bed the form of a whale; another thought it better to make hers like a little sea-woman; but the youngest made hers quite round, like the sun, and had flowers which gleamed red as the sun itself. She was a strange child, quiet and thoughtful; and when the other sisters made a display of the beautiful things they had received out of wrecked ships, she would have nothing beyond the red flowers which resembled the sun, except a pretty marble statue. This was a figure of a charming boy, hewn out of white clear stone, which had sunk down to the bottom of the sea from a wreck. She planted a pink weeping willow beside this statue; the tree grew famously, and hung its fresh branches over the statue towards the blue sandy ground, where the shadow showed violet, and moved like the branches themselves; it seemed as if the ends of the branches and the roots were playing together and wished to kiss each other.

There was no greater pleasure for her than to hear of the world of men above them. The old grandmother had to tell all she knew of ships and towns, of men and animals. It seemed particularly beautiful to her that up on the earth the flowers shed fragrance, for they had none down at the bottom of the sea, and that the trees were green, and that the fishes which one saw there among the trees could sing so loud and clear that it was a pleasure to hear them. What the grandmother called fishes were the little birds ; the Princess could not understand them in any other way, for she had never seen a bird.

"When you have reached your fifteenth year," said the grandmother, "you shall have leave to rise up out of the sea, to sit on the rocks in the moonlight, and to see the great ships as they sail by. Then you will see forests and towns ! "

In the next year one of the sisters was fifteen years of age, but each of the others was one year younger than the next ; so that the youngest had full five years to wait before she could come up from the bottom of the sea, and find how our world looked. But one promised to tell the others what she had seen and what she had thought the most beautiful on the first day of her visit ; for their grandmother could not tell them enough — there was so much about which they wanted information.

No one was more anxious about these things than the youngest — just that one who had the longest time to wait, and who was always quiet and thoughtful. Many a night she stood by the open window, and looked up through the dark blue water at the fishes splashing with their fins and tails. Moon and stars she could see ; they certainly shone quite faintly, but through the water they looked much larger than they appear in our eyes. When something like a black cloud passed among them, she knew that it was either a whale swimming over her head, or a ship with many people : they certainly did not think that a pretty little sea-maid was standing down below stretching up her white hands toward the keel of their ship.

Now the eldest Princess was fifteen years old, and might mount up to the surface of the sea.

When she came back, she had a hundred things to tell, —

but the finest thing, she said, was to lie in the moonshine on a sand-bank in the quiet sea, and to look at the neighboring coast, with the large town, where the lights twinkled like a hundred stars, and to hear the music and the noise and clamor of carriages and men, to see the many church steeples, and to hear the sound of the bells. Just because she could not get up to these, she longed for them more than for anything.

O how the youngest sister listened! and afterwards when she stood at the open window and looked up through the dark-blue water, she thought of the great city with all its bustle and noise; and then she thought she could hear the church bells ringing, even down to the depth where she was.

In the following year, the second sister received permission to mount upward through the water and to swim whither she pleased. She rose up just as the sun was setting; and this spectacle, she said, was the most beautiful. The whole sky looked like gold, and as to the clouds, she could not properly describe their beauty. They sailed away over her head, purple and violet-colored, but far quicker than the clouds there flew a flight of wild swans, like a long white veil, over the water toward where the sun stood. She swam toward them; but the sun sank, and the roseate hue faded on the sea and in the clouds.

In the following year the next sister went up. She was the boldest of them all, and therefore she swam up a broad stream that poured its waters into the sea. She saw glorious green hills clothed with vines; palaces and castles shone forth from amid splendid woods; she heard how all the birds sang; and the sun shone so warm that she was often obliged to dive under the water to cool her glowing face. In a little bay she found a whole swarm of little mortals. They were quite naked, and splashed about in the water: she wanted to play with them, but they fled in affright, and a little black animal came, — it was a dog, but she had never seen a dog, — and it barked at her so terribly that she became frightened, and tried to gain the open sea. But she could never forget the glorious woods, the green hills, and the pretty children, who could swim in the water, though they had not fish-tails.

The fourth sister was not so bold: she remained out in the midst of the wild sea, and declared that just there it was most beautiful. One could see for many miles around, and the sky above looked like a bell of glass. She had seen ships, but only in the far distance — they looked like sea-gulls; and the funny dolphins had thrown somersaults, and the great whales spouted out water from their nostrils, so that it looked like hundreds of fountains all around.

Now came the turn of the fifth sister. Her birthday came in the winter, and so she saw what the others had not seen the first time. The sea looked quite green, and great ice-bergs were floating about; each one appeared like a pearl, she said, and yet was much taller than the church steeples built by men. They showed themselves in the strangest forms, and shone like diamonds. She had seated herself upon one of the greatest of all, and let the wind play with her long hair; and all the sailing ships tacked about in a very rapid way beyond where she sat: but toward evening the sky became covered with clouds, it thundered and lightened, and the black waves lifted the great ice-blocks high up, and let them glow in the red glare. On all the ships the sails were reefed, and there was fear and anguish. But she sat quietly upon her floating iceberg, and saw the forked blue flashes dart into the sea.

Each of the sisters, as she came up for the first time to the surface of the water, was delighted with the new and beautiful sights she saw; but as they now had permission, as grown-up girls, to go whenever they liked, it became indifferent to them. They wished themselves back again, and after a month had elapsed they said it was best of all down below, for there one felt so comfortably at home.

Many an evening hour the five sisters took one another by the arm and rose up in a row over the water. They had splendid voices, more charming than any mortal could have; and when a storm was approaching, so that they could apprehend that ships would go down, they swam on before the ships and sang lovely songs, which told how beautiful it was at the bottom of the sea, and exhorted the sailors not to be afraid to come down. But these could not understand the

words, and thought it was the storm sighing; and they did not see the splendors below, for if the ships sank they were drowned, and came as corpses to the Sea-king's palace.

When the sisters thus rose up, arm in arm, in the evening time, through the water, the little sister stood all alone looking after them; and she felt as if she must weep; but the sea-maid has no tears, and for this reason she suffers far more acutely.

"O if I were only fifteen years old!" said she. "I know I shall love the world up there very much, and the people who live and dwell there."

At last she was really fifteen years old.

"Now, you see, you are grown up," said the grandmother, the old dowager. "Come, let me adorn you like your sisters."

And she put a wreath of white lilies in the little maid's hair, but each flower was half a pearl; and the old lady let eight great oysters attach themselves to the Princess's tail, in token of her high rank.

"But that hurts so!" said the little Sea-maid.

"Yes, pride must suffer pain," replied the old lady.

O how glad she would have been to shake off all the tokens of rank and lay aside the heavy wreath! Her red flowers in the garden suited her better; but she could not help it. "Farewell!" she said, and then she rose, light and clear as a water-bubble, up through the sea.

The sun had just set when she lifted her head above the sea, but all the clouds still shone like roses and gold, and in the pale red sky the evening-stars gleamed bright and beautiful. The air was mild and fresh, and the sea quite calm. There lay a great ship with three masts; one single sail only was set, for not a breeze stirred, and around in the shrouds and on the yards sat the sailors. There was music and singing, and as the evening closed in, hundreds of colored lanterns were lighted up, and looked as if the flags of every nation were waving in the air. The little Sea-maid swam straight to the cabin window, and each time the sea lifted her up, she could look through the panes, which were clear as crystal, and see many people standing within dressed in their

best. But the handsomest of all was the young Prince with the great black eyes: he was certainly not much more than sixteen years old; it was his birthday, and that was the cause of all this feasting. The sailors were dancing upon deck; and when the young Prince came out, more than a hundred rockets rose into the air; they shone like day, so that the little Sea-maid was quite startled, and dived under the water; but soon she put out her head again, and then it seemed just as if all the stars of heaven were falling down upon her. She had never seen such fire-works. Great suns spurted fire all around, glorious fiery fishes flew up into the blue air, and everything was mirrored in the clear blue sea. The ship itself was so brightly lit up that every separate rope could be seen, and the people therefore appeared the more plainly. O how handsome the young Prince was! And he pressed the people's hands and smiled, while the music rang out in the glorious night.

It became late; but the little Sea-maid could not turn her eyes from the ship and from the beautiful Prince. The colored lanterns were extinguished, rockets ceased to fly into the air, and no more cannons were fired; but there was a murmuring and a buzzing deep down in the sea; and she sat on the water, swaying up and down, so that she could look into the cabin. But as the ship got more way, one sail after another was spread. And now the waves rose higher, great clouds came up, and in the distance there was lightning. O! it was going to be fearful weather, therefore the sailors furled the sails. The great ship flew in swift career over the wild sea: the waters rose up like great black mountains, which wanted to roll over the masts; but like a swan the ship dived into the valleys between these high waves, and then let itself be lifted on high again. To the little Sea-maid this seemed merry sport, but to the sailors it appeared very differently. The ship groaned and creaked; the thick planks were bent by the heavy blows; the sea broke into the ship; the mainmast snapped in two like a thin reed; and the ship lay over on her side, while the water rushed into the hold. Now the little Sea-maid saw that the people were in peril; she herself was obliged to take care to avoid the beams and frag-

ments of the ship which were floating about on the waters. One moment it was so pitch dark that not a single object could be descried, but when it lightened it became so bright that she could distinguish every one on board. She looked particularly for the young Prince, and when the ship parted she saw him sink into the sea. Then she was very glad, for now he would come down to her. But then she remembered that people could not live in the water, and that when he got down to her father's palace he would certainly be dead. No, he must not die: so she swam about among the beams and planks that strewed the surface, quite forgetting that one of them might have crushed her. Diving down deep under the water, she again rose high up among the waves, and in this way she at last came to the Prince, who could scarcely swim longer in that stormy sea. His arms and legs began to fail him, his beautiful eyes closed, and he would have died had the little Sea-maid not come. She held his head up over the water, and then allowed the waves to carry her and him whither they listed.

When the morning came the storm had passed by. Of the ship not a fragment was to be seen. The sun came up red and shining out of the water; it was as if its beams brought back the hue of life to the cheeks of the Prince, but his eyes remained closed. The Sea-maid kissed his high, fair forehead and put back his wet hair, and he seemed to her to be like the marble statue in her little garden: she kissed him again and hoped that he might live.

Now she saw in front of her the dry land — high blue mountains, on whose summits the white snow gleamed as if swans were lying there. Down on the coast were glorious green forests, and a building — she could not tell whether it was a church or a convent — stood there. In its garden grew orange and citron-trees, and high palms waved in front of the gate. The sea formed a little bay there; it was quite calm, but very deep. Straight toward the rock where the fine white sand had been cast up, she swam with the handsome Prince, and laid him upon the sand, taking especial care that his head was raised in the warm sunshine.

Now all the bells rang in the great white building, and

many young girls came walking through the garden. Then the little Sea-maid swam farther out between some high stones that stood up out of the water, laid some sea-foam upon her hair and neck, so that no one could see her little countenance, and then she watched to see who would come to the poor Prince.

In a short time a young girl went that way. She seemed to be much startled, but only for a moment; then she brought more people, and the Sea-maid perceived that the Prince came back to life, and that he smiled at all around him. But he did not cast a smile at her: he did not know that she had saved him. And she felt very sorrowful; and when he was led away into the great building, she dived mournfully under the water and returned to her father's palace.

She had always been gentle and melancholy, but now she became much more so. Her sisters asked her what she had seen the first time she rose up to the surface, but she would tell them nothing.

Many an evening and many a morning she went up to the place where she had left the Prince. She saw how the fruits of the garden grew ripe and were gathered; she saw how the snow melted on the high mountain; but she did not see the Prince, and so she always returned home more sorrowful still. Then her only comfort was to sit in her little garden, and to wind her arm round the beautiful marble statue that resembled the Prince; but she did not tend her flowers; they grew as if in a wilderness over the paths, and trailed their long leaves and stalks up into the branches of trees, so that it became quite dark there.

At last she could endure it no longer, and told all to one of her sisters, and then the others heard of it too; but nobody knew of it beyond these and a few other sea-maids, who told the secret to their intimate friends. One of these knew who the Prince was; she too had seen the festival on board the ship; and she announced whence he came and where his kingdom lay.

"Come, little sister!" said the other Princesses; and, linking their arms together, they rose up in a long row out of the sea, at the place where they knew the Prince's palace lay

This palace was built of a kind of bright yellow stone, with great marble staircases, one of which led directly down into the sea. Over the roof rose splendid gilt cupolas, and between the pillars which surrounded the whole dwelling, stood marble statues which looked as if they were alive. Through the clear glass in the high windows one looked into the glorious halls, where costly silk hangings and tapestries were hung up, and all the walls were decked with splendid pictures, so that it was a perfect delight to see them. In the midst of the greatest of these halls a great fountain plashed; its jets shot high up toward the glass dome in the ceiling, through which the sun shone down upon the water and upon the lovely plants growing in the great basin.

Now she knew where he lived, and many an evening and many a night she spent there on the water. She swam far closer to the land than any of the others would have dared to venture; indeed, she went quite up the narrow channel under the splendid marble balcony, which threw a broad shadow upon the water. Here she sat and watched the young Prince, who thought himself quite alone in the bright moonlight.

Many an evening she saw him sailing, amid the sounds of music, in his costly boat with the waving flags; she peeped up through the green reeds, and when the wind caught her silver-white veil, and any one saw it, he thought it was a white swan spreading out its wings.

Many a night when the fishermen were on the sea with their torches, she heard much good told of the young Prince; and she rejoiced that she had saved his life when he was driven about, half dead, on the wild billows: she thought how quietly his head had reclined on her bosom, and how heartily she had kissed him; but he knew nothing of it, and could not even dream of her.

More and more she began to love mankind, and more and more she wished to be able to wander about among those whose world seemed far larger than her own. For they could fly over the sea in ships, and mount up the high hills far above the clouds, and the lands they possessed stretched out in woods and fields farther than her eyes could reach. There

was much she wished to know, but her sisters could not answer all her questions; therefore she applied to the old grandmother; and the old lady knew the upper world, which she rightly called "the countries above the sea," very well.

"If people are not drowned," asked the little Sea-maid, "can they live forever? Do they not die as we die down here in the sea?"

"Yes," replied the old lady. "They too must die, and their life is even shorter than ours. We can live to be three hundred years old, but when we cease to exist here, we are turned into foam on the surface of the water, and have not even a grave down here among those we love. We have not an immortal soul; we never receive another life; we are like the green sea-weed, which, when once cut through, can never bloom again. Men, on the contrary, have a soul which lives forever, which lives on after the body has become dust; it mounts up through the clear air, up to all the shining stars! As we rise up out of the waters and behold all the lands of the earth, so they rise up to unknown glorious places which we can never see."

"Why did we not receive an immortal soul?" asked the little Sea-maid, sorrowfully. "I would gladly give all the hundreds of years I have to live to be a human being only for one day, and to have a hope of partaking the heavenly kingdom."

"You must not think of that," replied the old lady. "We feel ourselves far more happy and far better than mankind yonder."

"Then I am to die and be cast as foam upon the sea, not hearing the music of the waves, nor seeing the pretty flowers and the red sun? Can I not do anything to win an immortal soul?"

"No!" answered the grandmother. "Only if a man were to love you so that you should be more to him than father or mother; if he should cling to you with his every thought and with all his love, and let the priest lay his right hand in yours with a promise of faithfulness here and in all eternity, then his soul would be imparted to your body, and you would receive a share of the happiness of mankind. He would give a soul

to you and yet retain his own. But that can never come to pass. What is considered beautiful here in the sea — the fish-tail — they would consider ugly on the earth: they don't understand it; there one must have two clumsy supports which they call legs, to be called beautiful."

Then the little Sea-maid sighed and looked mournfully upon her fish-tail.

"Let us be glad!" said the old lady. "Let us dance and leap in the three hundred years we have to live. That is certainly long enough; after that we can rest ourselves all the better. This evening we shall have a court ball."

It was a splendid sight, such as is never seen on earth. The walls and the ceiling of the great dancing-saloon were of thick but transparent glass. Several hundreds of huge shells, pink and grass-green, stood on each side in rows, filled with a blue fire which lit up the whole hall and shone through the walls, so that the sea without was quite lit up; one could see all the innumerable fishes, great and small, swimming toward the glass walls; of some the scales gleamed with purple, while in others they shone like silver and gold. Through the midst of the hall flowed a broad stream, and on this the sea-men and sea-women danced to their own charming songs. Such beautiful voices the people of the earth have not. The little Sea-maid sang the most sweetly of all, and the whole court applauded with hands and tails, and for a moment she felt gay in her heart, for she knew she had the loveliest voice of all in the sea or on the earth. But soon she thought again of the world above her; she could not forget the charming Prince, or her sorrow at not having an immortal soul like his. Therefore she crept out of her father's palace, and while everything within was joy and gladness, she sat melancholy in her little garden. Then she heard the bugle horn sounding through the waters, and thought, "Now he is certainly sailing above, he on whom my wishes hang, and in whose hand I should like to lay my life's happiness. I will dare everything to win him and an immortal soul. While my sisters dance yonder in my father's palace, I will go to the sea-witch of whom I have always been so much afraid: perhaps she can counsel and help me."

Now the little Sea-maid went out of her garden to the foam

ing whirlpools behind which the sorceress dwelt. She had never travelled that way before. No flowers grew there, no sea-grass; only the naked gray sand stretched out toward the whirlpools, where the water rushed round like roaring mill-wheels and tore down everything it seized into the deep. Through the midst of these rushing whirlpools she was obliged to pass to get into the domain of the witch; and for a long way there was no other road except one which led over warm gushing mud: this the witch called her turf-moor. Behind it lay her house in the midst of a singular forest, in which all the trees and bushes were polyps — half animals, half plants. They looked like hundred-headed snakes growing up out of the earth. All the branches were long, slimy arms, with fingers like supple worms, and they moved limb by limb from the root to the farthest point; all that they could seize on in the water they held fast and did not let it go. The little Sea-maid stopped in front of them quite frightened; her heart beat with fear, and she was near turning back; but then she thought of the Prince and the human soul, and her courage came back again. She bound her long, flying hair closely around her head, so that the polyps might not seize it. She put her hands together on her breast, and then shot forward as a fish shoots through the water, among the ugly polyps which stretched out their supple arms and fingers after her. She saw that each of them held something it had seized with hundreds of little arms, like strong iron bands. People who had perished at sea, and had sunk deep down, looked forth as white skeletons from among the polyps' arms; ships' oars and chests they also held fast, and skeletons of land animals and a little sea-woman whom they had caught and strangled and this seemed the most terrible of all to our little Princess.

Now she came to a great marshy place in the wood, where fat water-snakes rolled about, showing their ugly cream-colored bodies. In the midst of this marsh was a house built of white bones of shipwrecked men; there sat the Sea-witch, feeding a toad out of her mouth, just as a person might feed a little canary-bird with sugar. She called the ugly fat water-snakes her little chickens, and allowed them to crawl upward and all about her.

"I know what you want," said the Sea-witch. "It is stupid of you, but you shall have your way, for it will bring you to grief, my pretty Princess. You want to get rid of your fish-tail, and to have two supports instead of it, like those the people of the earth walk with, so that the young Prince may fall in love with you, and you may get an immortal soul." And with this the Witch laughed loudly and disagreeably, so that the toad and the water-snakes tumbled down to the ground, where they crawled about. "You come just in time," said the Witch: "after to-morrow at sunrise I could not help you until another year had gone by. I will prepare a draught for you, with which you must swim to land to-morrow before the sun rises, and seat yourself there and drink it; then your tail will shrivel up and become what the people of the earth call legs; but it will hurt you — it will seem as if you were cut with a sharp sword. All who see you will declare you to be the prettiest human being they ever beheld. You will keep your graceful walk; no dancer will be able to move so lightly as you; but every step you take will be as if you trod upon sharp knives, and as if your blood must flow. If you will bear all this, I can help you."

"Yes!" said the little Sea-maid, with a trembling voice; and she thought of the Prince and the immortal soul.

"But remember," said the Witch, "when you have once received a human form, you can never be a sea-maid again; you can never return through the water to your sisters, or to your father's palace; and if you do not win the Prince's love, so that he forgets father and mother for your sake, is attached to you heart and soul, and tells the priest to join your hands, you will not receive an immortal soul. On the first morning after he has married another, your heart will break, and you will become foam on the water."

"I will do it," said the little Sea-maid: but she became as pale as death.

"But you must pay me, too," said the Witch; "and it is not a trifle that I ask. You have the finest voice of all here at the bottom of the water; with that you think to enchant him; but this voice you must give to me. The best thing you possess I will have for my costly draught! I must give you my

own blood in it, so that the draught may be sharp as a two-edged sword."

"But if you take away my voice," said the little Sea-maid, "what will remain to me?"

"Your beautiful form," replied the Witch, "your graceful walk, and your speaking eyes: with those you can take captive a human heart. Well, have you lost your courage? Put out your little tongue, and then I will cut it off for my payment, and then you shall have the strong draught."

"It shall be so," said the little Sea-maid.

And the Witch put on her pot to brew the draught.

"Cleanliness is a good thing," said she; and she cleaned out the pot with the snakes, which she tied up in a big knot; then she scratched herself, and let her black blood drop into it. The stream rose up in the strangest forms, enough to frighten the beholder. Every moment the Witch threw something else into the pot; and when it boiled thoroughly, there was a sound like the weeping of a crocodile. At last the draught was ready. It looked like the purest water.

"There you have it," said the Witch.

And she cut off the little Sea-maid's tongue, so that now the Princess was dumb, and could neither sing nor speak.

She could see her father's palace. The torches were extinguished in the great hall, and they were certainly sleeping within, but she did not dare to go to them, now that she was dumb and was about to quit them forever. She felt as if her heart would burst with sorrow. She crept into the garden, took a flower from each bed of her sisters, blew a thousand kisses toward the palace, and rose up through the dark blue sea.

The sun had not yet risen when she beheld the Prince's castle, and mounted the splendid marble staircase. The moon shone beautifully clear. The little Sea-maid drank the burning sharp draught, and it seemed as if a two-edged sword went through her delicate body. She fell down in a swoon, and lay as if she were dead. When the sun shone out over the sea she awoke, and felt a sharp pain; but just before her stood the handsome young Prince. He fixed his coal-black eyes upon her, so that she cast down her own, and then she

perceived that her fish-tail was gone, and that she had the prettiest pair of white feet a little girl could have. But she had no clothes, so she shrouded herself in her long hair. The Prince asked how she came there; and she looked at him mildly, but very mournfully, with her dark-blue eyes, for she could not speak. Then he took her by the hand, and led her into the castle. Each step she took was, as the Witch had told her, as if she had been treading on pointed needles and knives, but she bore it gladly. At the Prince's right hand she moved on, light as a soap-bubble, and he, like all the rest, was astonished at her graceful, swaying movements.

She now received splendid clothes of silk and muslin. In the castle she was the most beautiful creature to be seen; but she was dumb, and could neither sing nor speak. Lovely slaves, dressed in silk and gold, stepped forward, and sang before the Prince and his royal parents; one sang more charmingly than all the rest, and the Prince smiled at her and clapped his hands. Then the little Sea-maid became sad; she knew that she herself had sung far more sweetly, and thought, —

"O! that he only knew I had given away my voice forever to be with him!"

Now the slaves danced pretty waving dances to the loveliest music; then the little Sea-maid lifted her beautiful white arms, stood on the tips of her toes, and glided dancing over the floor as no one had yet danced. At each movement her beauty became more apparent, and her eyes spoke more directly to the heart than the songs of the slaves.

All were delighted, and especially the Prince, who called her his little foundling; and she danced again and again, although every time she touched the earth it seemed as if she were treading upon sharp knives. The Prince said that she should always remain with him, and she received permission to sleep on a velvet cushion before his door.

He had a page's dress made for her, that she might accompany him on horseback. They rode through the blooming woods, where the green boughs swept their shoulders, and the little birds sang in the fresh leaves. She climbed with the Prince up the high mountains, and although her delicate feet

bled so that even the others could see it, she laughed at it herself, and followed him until they saw the clouds sailing beneath them, like a flock of birds travelling to distant lands.

At home in the Prince's castle, when the others slept at night, she went out on to the broad marble steps. It cooled her burning feet to stand in the cold sea-water, and then she thought of the dear ones in the deep.

Once, in the night-time, her sisters came, arm in arm. Sadly they sang as they floated above the water; and she beckoned to them, and they recognized her, and told her how she had grieved them all. Then she visited them every night; and once she saw in the distance her old grandmother, who had not been above the surface for many years, and the Sea-king with his crown upon his head. They stretched out their hands toward her, but did not venture so near the land as her sisters.

Day by day the Prince grew more fond of her. He loved her as one loves a dear, good child, but it never came into his head to make her his wife; and yet she must become his wife, or she would not receive an immortal soul, and would have to become foam on the sea on his marriage morning.

"Do you not love me best of them all?" the eyes of the little Sea-maid seemed to say, when he took her in his arms and kissed her fair forehead.

"Yes, you are the dearest to me!" said the Prince, "for you have the best heart of them all. You are the most devoted to me, and are like a young girl whom I once saw, but whom I certainly shall not find again. I was on board a ship which was wrecked. The waves threw me ashore near a holy temple, where several young girls performed the service The youngest of them found me by the shore and saved my life. I only saw her twice: she was the only one in the world I could love; but you chase her picture out of my mind, you are so like her. She belongs to the holy temple, and therefore my good fortune has sent you to me. We will never part!"

"Ah! he does not know that I saved his life," thought the little Sea-maid. "I carried him over the sea to the wood where the temple stands. I sat there under the foam and

looked to see if any one would come. I saw the beautiful girl whom he loves better than me." And the Sea-maid sighed deeply — she could not weep. "The maiden belongs to the holy temple," she said, "and will never come out into the world — they will meet no more. I am with him and see him every day; I will cherish him, love him, give up my life for him."

But now they said that the Prince was to marry, and that the beautiful daughter of a neighboring King was to be his wife, and that was why such a beautiful ship was being prepared. The story was, that the Prince travelled to visit the land of the neighboring King, but it was done that he might see the King's daughter. A great company was to go with him. The little Sea-maid shook her head and smiled; she knew the Prince's thoughts far better than any of the others.

"I must travel," he had said to her; "I must see the beautiful Princess: my parents desire it, but they do not wish to compel me to bring her home as my bride. I cannot love her. She is not like the beautiful maiden in the temple whom you resemble. If I were to choose a bride, I would rather choose you, my dear dumb foundling with the speaking eyes."

And he kissed her red lips and played with her long hair, so that she dreamed of happiness and of an immortal soul.

"You are not afraid of the sea, my dumb child?" said he, when they stood on the superb ship which was to carry him to the country of the neighboring King; and he told her of storm and calm, of strange fishes in the deep, and of what the divers had seen there. And she smiled at his tales, for she knew better than any one what happened at the bottom of the sea.

In the moonlight night, when all were asleep, except the steersman who stood by the helm, she sat on the side of the ship gazing down through the clear water. She fancied she saw her father's palace. High on the battlements stood her old grandmother, with the silver crown on her head, and looking through the rushing tide up to the vessel's keel. Then her sisters came forth over the water, and looked mournfully at her and wrung their white hands. She beckoned to them

smiled, and wished to tell them that she was well and happy; but the cabin-boy approached her and her sisters dived down, so that he thought the white objects he had seen were foam on the surface of the water.

The next morning the ship sailed into the harbor of the neighboring King's splendid city. All the church bells sounded, and from the high towers the trumpets were blown, while the soldiers stood there with flying colors and flashing bayonets. Each day brought some festivity with it; balls and entertainments followed one another; but the Princess was not yet there. People said she was being educated in a holy temple far away, where she was learning every royal virtue. At last she arrived.

The little Sea-maid was anxious to see the beauty of the Princess, and was obliged to acknowledge it. A more lovely apparition she had never beheld. The Princess's skin was pure and clear, and behind the long dark eyelashes there smiled a pair of faithful, dark-blue eyes.

"You are the lady who saved me when I lay like a corpse upon the shore!" said the Prince; and he folded his blushing bride to his heart. "O, I am too, too happy!" he cried to the little Sea-maid. "The best hope I could have is fulfilled. You will rejoice at my happiness, for you are the most devoted to me of them all!"

And the little Sea-maid kissed his hand; and it seemed al ready to her as if her heart was broken, for his wedding morn ing was to bring death to her, and change her into foam on the sea.

All the church bells were ringing, and heralds rode about the streets announcing the betrothal. On every altar fragrant oil was burning in gorgeous lamps of silver. The priests swung their censers, and bride and bridegroom laid hand in hand, and received the bishop's blessing. The little Sea-maid was dressed in cloth of gold, and held up the bride's train; but her ears heard nothing of the festive music, her eye marked not the holy ceremony; she thought of the night of her death, and of all that she had lost in this world.

On the same evening the bride and bridegroom went on board the ship. The cannon roared, all the flags waved; in

the midst of the ship a costly tent of gold and purple, with the most beautiful cushions, had been set up, and there the married pair were to sleep in the cool, still night.

The sails swelled in the wind, and the ship glided smoothly and lightly over the clear sea. When it grew dark, colored lamps were lighted and the sailors danced merry dances on deck. The little Sea-maid thought of the first time when she had risen up out of the sea, and beheld a similar scene of splendor and joy; and she joined in the whirling dance, and flitted on as the swallow flits away when he is pursued; and all shouted and admired her, for she had danced so prettily. Her delicate feet were cut as if with knives, but she did not feel it, for her heart was wounded far more painfully. She knew this was the last evening on which she should see him for whom she had left her friends and her home, and had given up her beautiful voice, and had suffered unheard-of pains every day, while he was utterly unconscious of all. It was the last evening she should breathe the same air with him, and behold the starry sky and the deep sea; and everlasting night without thought or dream awaited her, for she had no soul, and could win none. And everything was merriment and gladness on the ship till past midnight, and she laughed and danced with thoughts of death in her heart. The Prince kissed his beautiful bride, and she played with his raven hair, and hand in hand they went to rest in the splendid tent. It became quiet on the ship; only the helmsman stood by the helm, and the little Sea-maid leaned her white arms upon the bulwark and gazed out toward the east for the morning dawn — the first ray, she knew, would kill her. Then she saw her sisters rising out of the flood; they were pale, like herself; their long, beautiful hair no longer waved in the wind; it had been cut off.

"We have given it to the witch, that we might bring you help, so that you may not die to-night. She has given us a knife; here it is — look! how sharp! Before the sun rises you must thrust it into the heart of the Prince, and when the warm blood falls upon your feet they will grow together again into a fish-tail, and you will become a sea-maid again, and come back to us, and live your three hundred years before

you become dead salt sea-foam. Make haste! He or you must die before the sun rises! Our old grandmother mourns so that her white hair has fallen off, as ours did under the witch's scissors. Kill the Prince and come back! Make haste! Do you see that red streak in the sky? In a few minutes the sun will rise, and you must die!"

And they gave a very mournful sigh, and vanished beneath the waves. The little Sea-maid drew back the curtain from the tent, and saw the beautiful bride lying with her head on the Prince's breast; and she bent down and kissed his brow, and gazed up to the sky where the morning red was gleaming brighter and brighter; then she looked at the sharp knife, and again fixed her eyes upon the Prince, who in his sleep murmured his bride's name. She only was in his thoughts, and the knife trembled in the Sea-maid's hand. But then she flung it far away into the waves — they gleamed red where it fell, and it seemed as if drops of blood spurted up out of the water. Once more she looked with half-extinguished eyes upon the Prince; then she threw herself from the ship into the sea, and felt her frame dissolving into foam.

Now the sun rose up out of the sea. The rays fell mild and warm upon the cold sea-foam, and the little Sea-maid felt nothing of death. She saw the bright sun, and over her head sailed hundreds of glorious ethereal beings — she could see them through the white sails of the ship and the red clouds of the sky; their speech was melody, but of such a spiritual kind that no human ear could hear it, just as no human eye could see them; without wings they floated through the air. The little Sea-maid found that she had a frame like these, and was rising more and more out of the foam.

"Whither am I going?" she asked; and her voice sounded like that of the other beings, so spiritual, that no earthly music could be compared to it.

"To the daughters of the air!" replied the others. "A sea-maid has no immortal soul, and can never gain one, except she win the love of a mortal. Her eternal existence depends upon the power of another. The daughters of the air have likewise no immortal soul, but they can make themselves one through good deeds. We fly to the hot countries, where

the close, pestilent air kills men, and there we bring coolness. We disperse the fragrance of the flowers through the air, and spread refreshment and health. After we have striven for three hundred years to accomplish all the good we can bring about, we receive an immortal soul, and take part in the eternal happiness of men. You, poor little Sea-maid, have striven with your whole heart after the goal we pursue; you have suffered and endured; you have by good works raised yourself to the world of spirits, and can gain an immortal soul after three hundred years."

And the little Sea-maid lifted her glorified eyes toward God's sun, and for the first time she felt them fill with tears. On the ship there was again life and noise. She saw the Prince and his bride searching for her; then they looked mournfully at the pearly foam, as if they knew that she had thrown herself into the waves. Invisible, she kissed the forehead of the bride, fanned the Prince, and mounted with the other children of the air on the rosy cloud which floated through the ether. After three hundred years we shall thus float into Paradise!

"And we may even get there sooner," whispered a daughter of the air. "Invisibly we float into the houses of men where children are, and for every day on which we find a good child that brings joy to its parents and deserves their love, our time of probation is shortened. The child does not know when we fly through the room; and when we smile with joy at the child's conduct, a year is counted off from the three hundred; but when we see a naughty or a wicked child, we shed tears of grief, and for every tear a day is added to our time of trial."

THE FARM-YARD COCK AND THE WEATHER-COCK.

THERE were two cocks — one on the dunghill, the other on the roof. Both were conceited; but which of the two did most? Tell us your opinion; but we shall keep our own, nevertheless.

The poultry-yard was divided by a partition of boards from another yard, in which lay a manure heap, and on it lay and grew a great cucumber, which was fully conscious of being a forcing-bed plant.

"That's a privilege of birth," the Cucumber said to herself. "Not all can be born cucumbers: there must be other kinds too. The fowls, the ducks, and all the cattle in the neighboring yard are creatures too. I now look up to the Yard Cock on the partition. He certainly is of very much greater consequence than the Weather-cock, who is so highly placed, and who can't even creak, much less crow; and he has neither hens nor chickens, and thinks only of himself, and perspires verdigris. But the Yard Cock — he's something like a cock! His gait is like a dance, his crowing is music; and wherever he comes, it is known directly. What a trumpeter he is! If he would only come in here! Even if he were to eat me up, stalk and all, it would be quite a blissful death," said the Cucumber.

In the night the weather became very bad. Hens, chickens, and even the Cock himself sought shelter. The wind blew down the partition between the two yards with a crash, the tiles came tumbling down, but the Weather-cock sat firm. He did not even turn round; he could not turn round; and yet he was young and newly cast, but steady and sedate. He had been "born old," and did not at all resemble the birds that fly beneath the vault of heaven, such as the sparrows and swallows. He despised those, considering them piping birds of trifling stature — ordinary song birds. The pigeons, he allowed, were big and shining, and gleamed like mother-o'-pearl, and looked like a kind of weather-cocks; but then

they were fat and stupid, and their whole endeavor was to fill themselves with food.

"Moreover, they are such tedious things to converse with," said the Weather-cock.

The birds of passage had also paid a visit to the Weather-cock, and told him tales of foreign lands, — of airy caravans, and exciting robber stories; of encounters with birds of prey; and that was interesting for the first time, but the Weather-cock knew that afterwards they always repeated themselves, and that was tedious.

"They are tedious, and all is tedious," he said. "No one is fit to associate with, and one and all of them are wearisome and stupid. The world is worth nothing," he cried. "The whole thing is a stupidity."

The Weather-cock was what is called "used up;" and that quality would certainly have made him interesting in the eyes of the Cucumber, if she had known it; but she had only eyes for the Yard Cock, who had now actually come into her own yard.

The wind had blown down the plank, but the storm had passed over.

"What do you think of *that* crowing?" inquired the Yard Cock of his hens and chickens. "It was a little rough — the elegance was wanting."

And hens and chickens stepped upon the muck-heap, and the Cock strutted to and fro upon it like a knight.

"Garden plant!" he cried out to the Cucumber; and in this one word she understood his deep feeling, and forgot that he was pecking at her and eating her up — a happy death!

And the hens came, and the chickens came, and when one of them runs the rest run also; they clucked and chirped, and looked at the Cock, and were proud that he was of their kind.

"Cock-a-doodle-doo!" he crowed. "The chickens will grow up to be large fowls if I make a noise in the poultry-yard of the world."

And hens and chickens clucked and chirped, and the Cock told them a great piece of news: —

"A cock can lay an egg; and do you know what there is

in that egg? In that egg lies a basilisk. Men know that, and now you know it too — you know what is in me, and what a cock of the world I am."

And with this the Yard Cock flapped his wings, and made his comb swell up, and crowed again; and all of them shuddered — all the hens and the chickens; but they were proud that one of their people should be such a cock of the world. They clucked and chirped, so that the Weather-cock heard it; and he heard it, but he never stirred.

"It's all stupid stuff!" said a voice within the Weather-cock. "The Yard Cock does not lay eggs, and I am too lazy to lay any. If I liked, I could lay a wind-egg; but the world is not worth a wind-egg. And now I don't like even to sit here any longer."

And with this the Weather-cock broke off; but he did not kill the Yard Cock, though he intended to do so, as the hens declared. And what does the moral say? — "Better to crow than to be 'used up' and break off."

THE ELFIN MOUND.

SEVERAL large lizards were running quickly into the cleft of an old tree; they could understand each other perfectly, for they all spoke the lizard language.

"What a noise there is in the old Elfin mound!" said one of the Lizards. "What a rumbling and uproar! For two nights I have not been able to close my eyes, and might just as well have had a toothache, for then I certainly should not have slept."

"There is a something going on there," said the other Lizard. "They let the mound stand on four red poles till the crowing of the cock, to have it thoroughly aired; and the Elfin damsels have learnt new dances, in which there is some stamping. A something is going on, I'm sure."

"Yes; I have spoken to an earth-worm of my acquaintance," said the third Lizard. "The Earth-worm came direct from the mound, where day and night he had been rummaging about in the ground. He had heard a good deal; for he can see nothing, poor wretch, but eavesdropping and listening he understands to perfection. Visitors are expected at the Elfin

mound; visitors of rank, but who they were, the Earth-worm either would not or could not say. All the Jacks-o'-the lantern have been ordered to prepare a procession by torch-light; and all the silver and gold, of which there is plenty in the Elfin mound, will be polished and laid in the moonshine."

"But who can the strangers be?" said all the Lizards. "What can be going on? Listen! what a humming and buzzing!"

At the same instant the Elfin mound opened, and an elderly Elfin damsel, without a back, but for the rest very respectably dressed, came tripping forth. It was the old Elfin King's housekeeper; she was distantly related to him, and wore an amber heart on her forehead. Her feet were so nimble — trip — trap — trip — trap! — how she skipped along, right away to the moor to the Night-raven.

"You will be invited to the Elfin mound, and that to-night," said she. "But would you not do us a great favor, and take charge of the invitations? As you do not give parties yourself, you must do us this service. Strangers of high rank are coming to us; magicians of no small importance, let me tell you; and so the old Elfin King wants to show himself off to advantage."

"Who is to be invited?" asked the Night-raven.

"Why, to the grand ball everybody may come; men even, if they do but speak in their sleep, or are able to do something in our way. But the principal banquet is to be very select; those of the first rank only are to be invited. I have had a long discussion with the Elfin King; for, according to my notions, we cannot even ask ghosts. The Sea-god and his daughters must be invited first; 'tis true, they don't much like coming on dry land, but they will have probably a wet stone to sit upon, or maybe something better still; and then, I think, they will not refuse for this once. We must have the old Mountain Dwarfs of the first class, with tails; the Elf of the Brook, and the Brownie, and then, I think, we must not omit the Swart Elf, and the Skeleton Horse: they belong, it is true, to the clergy, who are not of our sort; however, 'tis their office, and they are, moreover, nearly related to us, and are continually paying us visits."

"Caw!" said the Night-raven, and flew away to invite the company.

The Elfin maidens were already dancing on the Elfin mound: they danced with long shawls, woven of haze and moonshine; and to all who like this sort of dancing, it seems pretty. In the centre of the Elfin mound was the great hall, splendidly ornamented; the floor was washed with moonshine, and the walls were rubbed with witches' fat, so that they shone in the light like tulip-leaves. In the kitchen there was a great quantity of frogs among the dishes; adders' skins, with little children's fingers' inside; salad of mushroom-seed; wet mice's snouts and hemlock; beer, from the brewery of the old Witch of the Moor; sparkling saltpetre wine from a grave-cellar, — all very substantial eating: rusty nails and church-window glass were among the delicacies and kickshaws.

The old Elfin King had his golden crown polished with powdered slate-pencil. It was the pencil of the head-scholar; and to obtain this one is very difficult for the Elfin King.

They hung up the curtains in the bed-chamber, and fastened them with adder spittle. There was, indeed, a humming and a buzzing in the Elfin mound!

"Now we must perfume the place with singed hair and pig's bristles; and then I think I shall have done my share of the business," said the little Elfin damsel.

"Dear papa," said the least of the daughters, "shall I now know who the high visitors are?"

"Well then," said he, "I suppose I must tell you. Two of my daughters are to show themselves off, in order to get married. Two will certainly be married. The aged Mountain Elf of Norway, who lives in the old Dovre-field, and possesses many craggy castles, and a gold-mine too, — which is a better thing than one imagines, — is coming here with his two sons; and they are to choose themselves wives. The hoary Elf is an honest old Norwegian, merry and straightforward. I have known him since many a long day, when we drank together to better acquaintance and good fellowship. He came here to fetch his wife, — she is dead now, — who was the daughter of the Rock-king. O, how I long to see the old northern Elf! His sons, people say, are coarse, blustering fellows; but maybe one wrongs them, and when older, they will improve."

"And when will they come?" asked his daughter.

"That depends on wind and weather," said the Elfin King. "They travel economically; they will come here by water. I wish they would go through Sweden; but the old gentleman has no inclination that way. He does not keep pace with the time, and that I can't bear."

At the same moment two Jacks-o'-the-lantern came hopping in, one faster than the other, and for that reason one was first.

"They're coming! they're coming!" cried they.

"Give me my crown; and let me stand in the moonsnine," said the Elfin King.

The daughters held up their long shawls and bowed to the earth.

There stood the hoary Mountain Elf, with a crown of hardened icicles and polished fir-cones on his head, and wrapped up in a mantle of fur and boots of the same. His sons, on the contrary, went with open throats, for they disdained the cold.

"Is that a mound?" asked the lesser of the youths, pointing to Elfin-home. "In Norway we call such a thing a hole."

"Boy," said the father, "a mound rises upward, and a hole goes inward. Have you no eyes in your head?"

Now they went in to the Elfin mound, where there was very choice company, certainly; and had come together with such speed, one might have thought they had been borne thither on the breeze; however, the arrangements for every one were neat and pretty. The sea-folk sat at table in large water-butts; and they said they felt just as if they were at home. All observed good manners at the table, except the two little Norwegian Mountain Elves, who put their feet on the board, for they thought that all they did was becoming.

"Take your feet away from the plates," said the old Elf; and then they obeyed, although not immediately. They tickled the ladies next them with fir-cones; then they pulled off their boots, to be more at their ease, and gave them to the ladies to hold for them; but their father was very different. He told about the proud Norwegian rocks, and of the water-falls, which, covered with foam, dashed downwards, raging and

roaring like thunder; he told about the salmon, that leaps up against the falling waters, when the Spirit of the flood plays on her golden harp. He related about the clear winter nights, when the bells on the sledges jingle, and the youths run with flaming torches over the smooth ice, which is so transparent that they could see how affrighted the fishes were beneath their feet. He, indeed, could recount so that one saw and heard the things he described; when, huzza! all of a sudden, the old Elf gave one of the Elfin damsels a smacking kiss; and yet they were not even distantly related.

The Elfin maidens were now to dance, simple as well as stamping dances; and then came the most difficult one of all, the so-called "Dance out of the dance." Confound it! their legs grew so long, one did not know which was the beginning nor which was the end: one could not distinguish legs from arms; all was twirling about in the air like sawdust; and they went whizzing round to such a degree that the Skeleton Horse grew quite sick, and was obliged to leave the table.

"Brrrrr!" said the gray-headed Elf; "that's a regular Highland fling, as it's called. But what can they do besides spinning about like a whirlwind?"

"That you shall see," said the King, calling the youngest of his daughters. She was as delicate and fair as moonlight, and was the daintiest of all the sisters. She put a white wand in her mouth, and vanished. That was her art.

But the old Mountain Elf said, "This was an art he should not at all like in his wife, nor did he think his sons would either."

The other could walk beside her own self, as though she had a shadow, which is a thing Elves never have.

The third one's talent was of a very different kind; she had learned in the brewery of the Witch of the Moor, and she knew how to lard alder-wood with glow-worms.

"She would make a good housewife," said the Mountain Elf, blinking, for he did not at all like drinking so much.

Then came the fourth Elfin maiden; she had a large golden harp, and when she touched the first string, everybody lifted up the left foot, for the Elves are all left-sided; and when she touched the next, everybody was forced to do whatever she pleased.

"That is a dangerous damsel," said the Mountain Elf; but both his sons went out of the Elfin mound, for they were tired of it.

"What can the next daughter do?" asked the old Elf.

"I have learned to love the Norwegians," said she; and I will not marry unless I can go to Norway."

But the youngest of the sisters whispered into the old Elf's ear, "She only says that, because she has heard, in an old Norwegian rhyme, that when even the world is at an end, the rocks of Norway will stand firm; and that's the reason she wants to go there, for she is greatly afraid of death."

"Ho, ho!" said the old Elf; "that's the way the wind blows, is it? But what can the seventh and last do?"

"The sixth comes before the seventh," said the Elfin King, for he knew how to count; but the sixth at first would not come forward.

"I can do nothing except tell people the truth," said she. "No one troubles about me, and I have enough to do to get my shroud ready."

Now came the seventh and last. And what could she do? She could tell as many fairy-tales as she chose.

"Here are my five fingers," said the old Mountain Elf. "For each one tell me a story."

And the Elfin maiden took hold of him by the wrist, and he laughed till he was almost choked; and when she came to the finger that wore a golden ring, just as if it knew that matrimony was going on, the old Elf said, "Hold fast what you have! The hand is yours! I will take you myself to wife!"

And the Elfin maiden said that the fairy-tale to the ring-finger and to the little finger were wanting.

"O, we'll hear them in winter," said the old Elf; "and about the fir-tree too, and about the birch, and the gifts of the wood-nymphs, and about the crackling frost. You shall have opportunities enough of telling stories, for no one understands that yonder. And there we will sit in our rocky dwelling, where the pine-torch is burning, and where we drink mead out of the golden horns of the old Norwegian kings; I got some as a present from the Water-spirit. And when we are sitting so together, Garbo will come to pay us a visit, and he will sing

to you all the songs of the mountain maidens. How merry we shall be! The salmon will leap in the waterfall, and dash against the walls of rock; but he will not be able to come in to us, after all! Yes, yes; one leads a happy, comfortable life in dear old Norway! But where are the boys?"

Where were they? Why, they were running about the fields, blowing out the wills-o'-the-wisp that were coming quite orderly to have a procession with torches.

"What's all this harum-scarum about?" said the old Elf. "I have taken a step-mother for you; methinks now you may choose a wife too."

But they said they liked speechifying and boon companionship better, and had no taste for matrimony; and so they made speeches, tossed off their glasses, and turned them topsy-turvy, to show that they were quite empty. They then pulled off their coats, and lay down on the table to sleep. But the old Elf danced round the room with his young bride, and exchanged boots with her; for that is much more genteel than exchanging rings.

"The cock is crowing!" said the elderly damsel who attended to the housekeeping. "We must now bolt the shutters, lest the sun should spoil our complexions."

And then the mound closed. The Lizards ran about and up and down the cleft tree, and one said to the other, "How much I like the old Mountain Elf!"

"I like the merry boys better," said the Earth-worm; but then he could not see, poor wretch!

SOUP MADE OF A SAUSAGE-STICK.

I.

"THAT was a splendid dinner yesterday," observed an old mouse of the female sex to another who had not been at the feast. "I sat number twenty-one from the old Mouse King, so that I was not badly placed. Should you like to hear the order of the banquet? The courses were very well arranged — mouldy bread, bacon rind, tallow candle, and sausage; and then the same dishes over again from the beginning: it was just as good as having two banquets in succession. There was as much jovialty and agreeable jesting as in the family circle. Nothing was left but the sausage-sticks. And the discourse turned upon these; and at last the expression, 'Soup of a sausage-stick,' was mentioned. Every one had heard the proverb, but no one had ever tasted the soup, much less prepared it. A capital toast was drunk to the inventor of the soup, and it was said he deserved to be a relieving officer. Was not that witty? And the old Mouse King stood up, and promised that the young female mouse who could best prepare that soup should be his Queen; a year and a day was allowed for the purpose."

"That was not at all bad," said the other Mouse; "but how does one prepare this soup?"

"Ah, how is it prepared? That is just what all the young female mice, and the old ones too, are asking. They would all very much like to be Queen; but they don't want to take the trouble to go out into the world to learn how to prepare the soup, and that they would certainly have to do. But every one has not the gift of leaving the family circle and the chimney corner. In foreign parts one can't get cheese-rinds and bacon every day. No, one must bear hunger, and perhaps be eaten up alive by a cat."

Such were probably the considerations by which the majority were deterred from going out into the wide world and gaining information. Only four little Mice announced themselves ready to depart. They were young and brisk, but

poor. Each of them wished to proceed to one of the four quarters of the globe, and then it would become manifest which of them was favored by fortune. Each one took a sausage-stick, so as to keep in mind the object of the journey. The stiff sausage-stick was to be to them as a pilgrim's staff.

It was at the beginning of May that they set out, and they did not return till the May of the following year; and then only three of them appeared. The fourth did not report herself, nor was there any intelligence of her, though the day of trial was close at hand.

"Yes, there's always some drawback in even the pleasantest affair," said the Mouse King.

And then he gave orders that all mice within a circuit of many miles should be invited. They were to assemble in the kitchen, where the three travelled Mice would stand up in a row, while a sausage-stick, shrouded in crape, was set up as a memento of the fourth, who was missing. No one was to proclaim his opinion till the Mouse King had settled what was to be said. And now let us hear.

II.

What the first little Mouse had seen and learned in her Travels.

"When I went out into the wide world," said the little Mouse, "I thought, as many think at my age, that I had already learned everything; but that was not the case. Years must pass before one gets so far. I went to sea at once. I went in a ship that steered towards the north. They had told me that the ship's cook must know how to manage things at sea; but it is easy enough to manage things when one has plenty of sides of bacon, and whole tubs of salt pork and mouldy flour. One has delicate living on board; but one does not learn to prepare soup of a sausage-stick. We sailed along for many days and nights; the ship rocked fearfully, and we did not get off without a wetting. When we at last reached the port to which we were bound, I left the ship; and it was high up in the far north.

"It is a wonderful thing, to go out of one's own corner at

home, and sail in a ship, where one has a sort of corner too, and then suddenly to find oneself hundreds of miles away in a strange land. I saw great pathless forests of pine and birch, which smelt so strong that I sneezed, and thought of sausage. There were great lakes there too. When I came close to them the waters were quite clear, but from a distance they looked black as ink. Great swans floated upon them: I thought at first they were spots of foam, they lay so still; but then I saw them walk and fly, and I recognized them. They belong to the goose family — one can see that by their walk; for no one can deny his parentage. I kept with my own kind. I associated with the forest and field mice, who, by the way, know very little, especially as regards cookery, though this was the very subject that had brought me abroad. The thought that soup might be boiled out of a sausage-stick was such a startling statement to them, that it flew at once from mouth to mouth through the whole forest. They declared the problem could never be solved; and little did I think that there, on the very first night, I should be initiated into the method of its preparation. It was in the height of summer, and that, the mice said, was the reason why the wood smelt so strongly, and why the herbs were so fragrant, and the lakes so transparent and yet so dark, with their white, swimming swans.

"On the margin of the wood, among three or four houses, a pole as tall as the mainmast of a ship had been erected, and from its summit hung wreaths and fluttering ribbons: this was called a may-pole. Men and maids danced round the tree, and sang as loudly as they could to the violin of the fiddler. There were merry doings at sundown and in the moonlight, but I took no part in them — what has a little mouse to do with a May dance? I sat in the soft moss and held my sausage-stick fast. The moon threw its beams especially upon one spot, where a tree stood, covered with moss so exceedingly fine, I may almost venture to say it was as fine as the skin of the Mouse King; but it was of a green color, and that is a great relief to the eye.

"All at once the most charming little people came marching forth. They were only tall enough to reach to my knee.

They looked like men, but were better proportioned: they called themselves elves, and had delicate clothes on, of flowers trimmed with the wings of flies and gnats, which had a very good appearance. Directly they appeared, they seemed to be seeking for something — I knew not what; but at last some of them came toward me, and the chief pointed to my sausage-stick, and said, 'That is just such a one as we want; it is pointed; it is capital!' and the longer he looked at my staff the more delighted he became.

"'I will lend it,' I said, 'but not to keep.'

"'Not to keep!' they all repeated; and they seized the sausage-stick, which I gave up to them, and danced away to the spot where the fine moss grew; and here they set up the stick in the midst of the green. They wanted to have a may-pole of their own, and the one they now had seemed cut out for them; and they decorated it so that it was beautiful to behold.

"First, little spiders spun it round with gold thread, and hung it all over with fluttering veils and flags, so finely woven, bleached so snowy white in the moonshine, that they dazzled my eyes. They took colors from the butterfly's wing, and strewed these over the white linen, and flowers and diamonds gleamed upon it, so that I did not know my sausage-stick again: there is not in all the world such a may-pole as they made of it. And now came the real great party of elves. They were quite without clothes, and looked as genteel as possible; and they invited me to be present at the feast; but I was to keep at a certain distance, for I was too large for them.

"And now began such music! It sounded like thousands of glass bells, so full, so rich, that I thought the swans were singing. I fancied also that I heard the voice of the cuckoo and the blackbird, and at last the whole forest seemed to join in. I heard children's voices, the sound of bells, and the song of birds — the most glorious melodies — and all came from the elves' may-pole, namely, my sausage-stick. I should never have believed that so much could come out of it; but that depends very much upon the hands into which it falls. I was quite touched. I wept, as a little mouse may weep with pure pleasure.

"The night was far too short; but it is not longer up yonder at that season. In the morning dawn the breeze began to blow, the mirror of the forest lake was covered with ripples, and all the delicate veils and flags fluttered in the air. The waving garlands of spider's web, the hanging bridges and balustrades, and whatever else they are called, flew away as if they were nothing at all. Six elves brought me back my sausage-stick, and asked me at the same time if I had any wish that they could gratify; so I asked them if they could tell me how soup was made of a sausage-stick.

"'How *we* do it?' asked the chief of the elves, with a smile. 'Why, you have just seen it. I fancy you hardly know your sausage-stick again.'

"'You only mean that as a joke,' I replied. And then I told them in so many words why I had undertaken a journey, and what great hopes were founded on the operation at home. 'What advantage,' I asked, 'can accrue to our Mouse King, and to our whole powerful state, from the fact of my having witnessed all this festivity? I cannot shake it out of the sausage-stick, and say, "Look, here is the stick, now the soup will come." That would be a dish that could only be put on the table when the guests had dined.'

"Then the Elf dipped his little finger into the cup of a blue violet, and said to me, —

"'See here! I will anoint your pilgrim's staff; and when you go back to your country, and come to the castle of the Mouse King, you have but to touch him with the staff, and violets will spring forth and cover its whole surface, even in the coldest winter-time. And so I think I've given you something to carry home, and a little more than something!'"

But before the little Mouse said what this "something more" was, she stretched her staff out toward the King, and in very truth the most beautiful bunch of violets burst forth; and the scent was so powerful that the Mouse King incontinently ordered the mice who stood nearest the chimney to thrust their tails into the fire and create a smell of burning, for the odor of the violets was not to be borne, and was not of the kind he liked.

"But what was the 'something more' of which you spoke?" asked the Mouse King.

"Why," the little Mouse answered, "I think it is what they call effect!" And herewith she turned the staff round, and, lo! there was not a single flower to be seen upon it; she only held the naked stick, and lifted this up, as a musical conductor lifts his *bâton*. "'Violets,' the Elf said to me, are for sight, and smell, and touch. Therefore it yet remains to provide for hearing and taste!'"

And now the little Mouse began to beat time; and music was heard, not such as sounded in the forest among the elves, but such as is heard in the kitchen. There was a bubbling sound of boiling and roasting; and all at once it seemed as if the sound were rushing through every chimney, and pots or kettles were boiling over. The fire-shovel hammered upon the brass kettle, and then, on a sudden, all was quiet again. They heard the quiet, subdued song of the tea-kettle, and it was wonderful to hear — they could not quite tell if the kettle were beginning to sing or leaving off; and the little pot simmered, and the big pot simmered, and neither cared for the other: there seemed to be no reason at all in the pots. The little Mouse flourished her *bâton* more and more wildly; the pots foamed and threw up large bubbles, and boiled over, and the wind roared and whistled through the chimney. O! it became so terrible that the little Mouse lost her stick at last.

"That was a heavy soup!" said the Mouse King. "Shall we not soon hear about the preparation?"

"That was all," said the little Mouse, with a bow.

"That all! Then we should be glad to hear what the next has to relate," said the Mouse King.

III.

What the second little Mouse had to tell.

"I was born in the palace library," said the second Mouse. "I and several members of our family never knew the happiness of getting into the dining-room, much less into the store-room; on my journey, and here to-day, are the only times I have seen a kitchen. We have indeed often been compelled to

suffer hunger in the library, but we get a good deal of knowledge. The rumor penetrated even to us, of the royal prize offered to those who could cook soup out of a sausage-stick; and it was my old grandmother who thereupon ferreted out a manuscript, which she certainly could not read, but which she had heard read out, and in which it was written: 'Those who are poets can boil soup out of a sausage-stick.' She asked me if I were a poet. I felt quite innocent on the subject, and then she told me I must go out, and manage to become one. I again asked what was requisite in that particular, for it was as difficult for me to find that out as to prepare the soup; but grandmother had heard a good deal of reading, and she said that three things were especially necessary: 'Understanding, imagination, feeling — if you can manage to obtain these three, you are a poet, and the sausage-stick affair will be quite easy to you.'

"And I went forth, and marched towards the west, away into the wide world, to become a poet.

"Understanding is the most important thing in every affair. I knew that, for the two other things are not held in half such respect, and consequently I went out first to seek Understanding. Yes, where does he dwell? 'Go to the ant and be wise,' said the great King of the Jews; I knew that from my library experience; and I never stopped till I came to the first great ant-hill, and there I placed myself on the watch to become wise.

"The ants are a respectable people. They are understanding itself. Everything with them is like a well worked sum, that comes right. To work and to lay eggs, they say, is to live while you live, and to provide for posterity; and accordingly that is what they do They were divided into the clean and the dirty ants. The rank of each is indicated by a number, and the Ant Queen is number ONE; her view is the only correct one, she is the receptacle of all wisdom; that was important for me to know. She spoke so much, and it was all so clever, that it sounded to me like nonsense. She declared her ant-hill was the loftiest thing in the world; though close by it grew a tree, which was certainly loftier, much loftier; that could not be denied, and therefore it was never mentioned.

One evening an ant had lost herself upon the tree; she had crept up the stem — not up to the crown, but higher than any ant had climbed until then; and when she turned, and came back home, she talked of something she had found in her travels far higher than the ant-hill; but the other ants considered that an insult to the whole community, and consequently she was condemned to wear a muzzle, and to continual solitary confinement. But a short time afterward another ant got on the tree, and made the same journey and the same discovery: and this one spoke with emphasis, and distinctly, as they said; and as, moreover, she was one of the pure ants and very much respected, they believed her; and when she died they erected an egg-shell as a memorial of her, for they had a great respect for the sciences. I saw," continued the little Mouse, "that the ants are always running to and fro with their eggs on their backs. One of them once dropped her egg; she exerted herself greatly to pick it up again, but she could not succeed. Then two others came up, and helped her with all their might, insomuch that they nearly dropped their own eggs over it; but then they certainly at once relaxed their exertions, for each should think of himself first — the Ant Queen had declared that by so doing they exhibited at once heart and understanding.

"'These two qualities,' she said, 'place us ants on the highest step among all reasoning beings. Understanding is seen among us all in predominant measure, and I have the greatest share of understanding.' And so saying, she raised herself on her hind legs, so that she was easily to be recognized. I could not be mistaken, and I ate her up. We were to go to the ants to learn wisdom — and I had got the Queen!"

"I now proceeded nearer to the before-mentioned lofty tree. It was an oak, and had a great trunk and a far-spreading top, and was very old. I knew that a living being dwelt there, a Dryad, as it is called, who is born with the tree and dies with it. I had heard about this in the library; and now I saw an oak-tree and an oak girl. She uttered a piercing cry when she saw me so near. Like all females, she was very much afraid of mice; and she had more ground for fear than others, for I might have gnawed through the stem of the tree on which

her life depended. I accosted the maiden in a friendly and honest way, and bade her take courage. And she took me up in her delicate hand; and when I had told her my reason for coming out into the wide world, she promised me that perhaps on that very evening I should have one of the two treasures of which I was still in quest. She told me that Phantasus, the genius of imagination, was her very good friend, that he was beautiful as the God of Love, and that he rested many an hour under the leafy boughs of the tree, which then rustled more than ever over the pair of them. He called her his dryad, she said, and the tree his tree, for the grand gnarled oak was just to his taste, with its root burrowing so deep in the earth, and the stem and crown rising so high out in the fresh air, and knowing the beating snow, and the sharp wind, and the warm sunshine as they deserve to be known. 'Yes,' the Dryad continued, 'the birds sing aloft there in the branches, and tell each other of strange countries they have visited; and on the only dead bough the stork has built a nest which is highly ornamental, and, moreover, one gets to hear something of the land of pyramids. All this is very pleasing to Phantasus; but it is not enough for him: I myself must talk to him, and tell him of life in the woods, and must revert to my childhood, when I was little, and the tree such a delicate thing that a stinging-nettle overshadowed it — and I have to tell everything, till now that the tree is great and strong. Sit you down under the green thyme, and pay attention; and when Phantasus comes, I shall find an opportunity to pinch his wings, and to pull out a little feather. Take the pen — no better is given to any poet — and it will be enough for you!'

"And when Phantasus came the feather was plucked, and I seized it," said the little Mouse. "I put it in water, and held it there till it grew soft. It was very hard to digest, but I nibbled it up at last. It is very easy to gnaw oneself into being a poet, though there are many things one must do. Now I had these two things, imagination and understanding, and through these I knew that the third was to be found in the library; for a great man has said and written that there are romances whose sole and single use is that they relieve

people of their superfluous tears, and that they are, in fact, a sort of sponges sucking up human emotion. I remembered a few of these old books, which had always looked especially palatable, and were much thumbed and very greasy, having evidently absorbed a great deal of feeling into themselves.

"I betook myself back to the library, and, so to speak, devoured a whole novel — that is, the essence of it, the interior part, for I left the crust, or binding. When I had digested this, and a second one in addition, I felt a stirring within me, and I ate a bit of a third romance, and now I was a poet. I said so to myself, and told the others also. I had headache, and chestache, and I can't tell what aches besides. I began thinking what kind of stories could be made to refer to a sausage-stick; and many pegs, and sticks, and staves, and splinters came into my mind — the Ant Queen must have had a particularly fine understanding. I remembered the man who took a white stick in his mouth, by which means he could render himself and the stick invisible; I thought of stick hobby-horses, of 'stock rhymes,' of 'breaking the staff' over an offender, and goodness knows how many phrases more concerning sticks, stocks, staves, and pegs. All my thoughts ran upon sticks, staves, and pegs; and when one is a poet (and I am a poet, for I have worked most terribly hard to become one) a person can make poetry on these subjects. I shall therefore be able to wait upon you every day with a poem or a history — and that's the soup I have to offer."

"Let us hear what the third has to say," was now the Mouse King's command.

"Piep! piep!" cried a small voice at the kitchen door, and a little Mouse — it was the fourth of the Mice who had contended for the prize, the one whom they looked upon as dead — shot in like an arrow. She toppled the sausage-stick with the crape covering over in a moment. She had been running day and night, and had travelled on the railway, in the freight train, having watched her opportunity, and yet she had almost come too late. She pressed forward, looking very much rumpled, and she had lost her sausage-stick, but not her voice, for she at once took up the word, as if they had been waiting only for her, and wanted to hear none but her, and as if everything

else in the world were of no consequence. She spoke at once, and spoke fully: she had appeared so suddenly that no one found time to object to her speech or to her, while she was speaking. And now let us hear what she said.

IV.

What the fourth Mouse, who spoke before the Third had spoken, had to tell.

"I betook myself immediately to the largest town," she said; "the name has escaped me — I have a bad memory for names. From the railway I was carried, with some confiscated goods, to the council-house, and when I arrived there, I ran into the dwelling of the jailer. The jailer was talking of his prisoners, and especially of one, who had spoken unconsidered words. These words had given rise to others, and these latter had been written down and recorded.

"'The whole thing is soup of a sausage-stick,' said the Jailer; 'but the soup may cost him his neck.

"Now, this gave me an interest in the prisoner," continued the Mouse, "and I watched my opportunity and slipped into his prison — for there's a mouse-hole to be found behind every locked door. The prisoner looked pale, and had a great beard and bright, sparkling eyes. The lamp flickered and smoked, but the walls were so accustomed to that, that they grew none the blacker for it. The prisoner scratched pictures and verses in white upon the black ground, but I did not read them. I think he found it tedious, and I was a welcome guest. He lured me with bread crumbs, with whistling, and with friendly words: he was glad to see me, and gradually I got to trust him, and we became good friends. He let me run upon his hand, his arm, and into his sleeve; he let me creep about on his beard, and called me his little friend. I really got to love him, for these things are reciprocal. I forgot my mission in the wide world, forgot my sausage-stick: that I had placed in a crack in the floor — it's lying there still. I wished to stay where I was, for if I went away the poor prisoner would have no one at all, and that's having *too* little, in this world. I stayed, but *he* did not stay. He spoke to me very mournfully

the last time, gave me twice as much bread and cheese as usual, and kissed his hand to me; then he went away, and never came back. I don't know his history.

"'Soup of a sausage-stick!' said the Jailer, to whom I now went; but I should not have trusted him. He took me in his hand, certainly, but he popped me into a cage, a treadmill. That's a horrible engine, in which you go round and round without getting any farther; and people laugh at you into the bargain.

"The Jailer's Granddaughter was a charming little thing, with a mass of curly hair that shone like gold, and such merry eyes, and such a smiling mouth!

"'You poor little mouse,' she said, as she peeped into my ugly cage; and she drew out the iron rod, and forth I jumped to the window board, and from thence to the roof spout. Free! free! I thought only of that, and not of the goal of my journey.

"It was dark, and night was coming on. I took up my quarters in an old tower, where dwelt a watchman and an owl. That is a creature like a cat, who has the great failing that she eats mice. But one may be mistaken, and so was I, for this was a very respectable, well-educated old owl; she knew more than the watchman, and as much as I. The young owls are always making a racket; but 'Go and make soup of a sausage-stick,' were the hardest words she could prevail on herself to utter, she was so fondly attached to her family. Her conduct inspired me with so much confidence, that from the crack in which I was crouching, I called out 'piep!' to her. This confidence of mine pleased her hugely, and she assured me I should be under her protection, and that no creature should be allowed to do me wrong; she would reserve me for herself, for the winter, when there would be short commons.

"She was in every respect a very clever woman, and explained to me how the watchman could only 'whoop' with the horn that hung at his side, adding, 'He is terribly conceited about it, and imagines he's an owl in the tower. Wants to do great things, but is very small — soup of a sausage-stick!'

"I begged the Owl to give me the recipe for this soup, and then she explained the matter to me.

"'Soup of a sausage-stick,' she said, 'was only a human proverb, and was to be understood thus: Each thinks his own way the best, but the whole signifies nothing.'

"'Nothing!' I exclaimed. I was quite struck. Truth is not always agreeable, but truth is above everything; and that's what the old Owl said. I now thought about it, and readily perceived that if I brought what was *above everything*, I brought something far beyond soup of a sausage-stick. So I hastened away, that I might get home in time, and bring the highest and best, that is above everything — namely, *the truth*. The mice are an enlightened people, and the King is above them all. He is capable of making me Queen, for the sake of truth."

"Your truth is a falsehood," said the Mouse who had not yet spoken. "I can prepare the soup, and I mean to prepare it."

V.

How it was prepared.

"I did not travel," the third Mouse said. "I remained in my country — that's the right thing to do. There's no necessity for travelling; one can get everything as good here. I stayed at home. I've not learned what I know from supernatural beings, or gobbled it up, or held converse with owls. I have what I know through my own reflections. Will you make haste and put that kettle upon the fire? So — now — water must be poured in — quite full, up to the brim! so, now more fuel — make up the fire, that the water may boil — it must boil over and over! So — I now throw the peg in. Will the King now be pleased to dip his tail in the boiling water, and to stir it round with the said tail? The longer the King stirs it, the more powerful will the soup become. It costs nothing at all — no further materials are necessary, only stir it round!"

"Cannot any one else do that?" asked the Mouse King.

"No," replied the Mouse. "The power is contained only in the tail of the Mouse King."

And the water boiled and bubbled, and the Mouse King

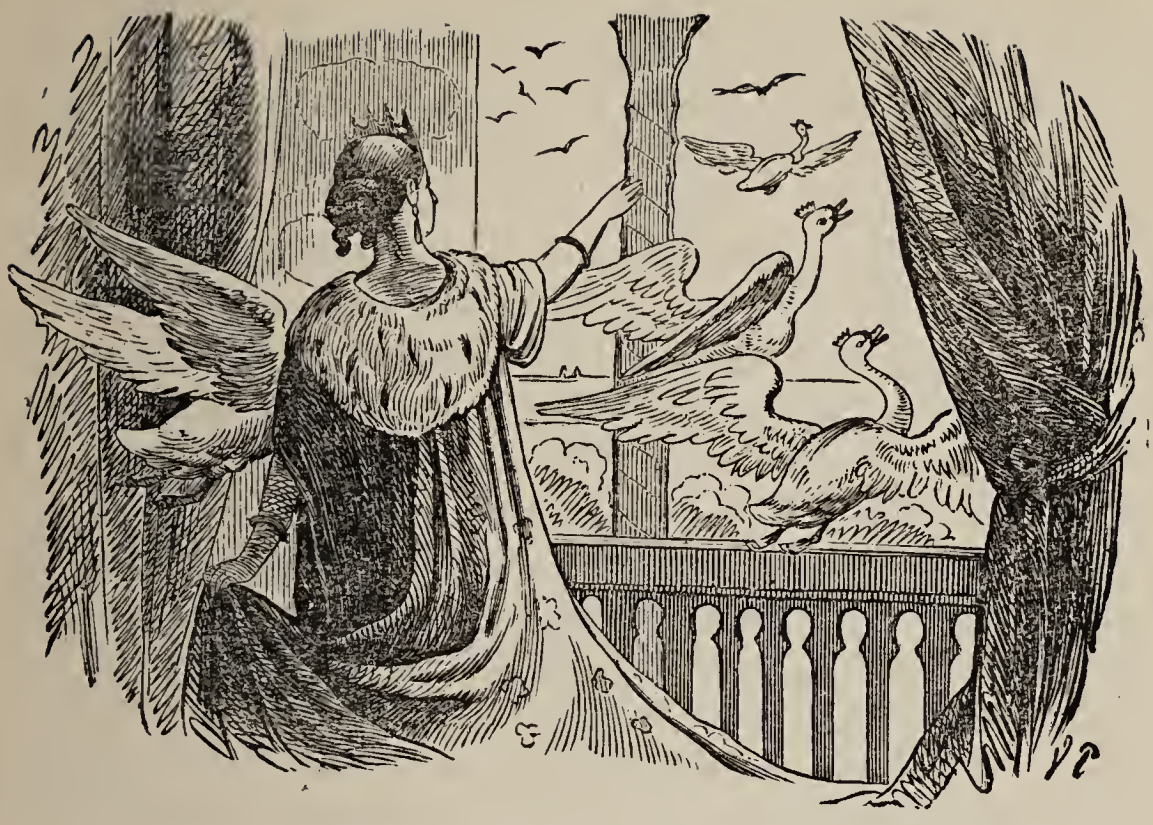
stood close beside the kettle,— there was almost danger in it, — and he put forth his tail as the mice do in the dairy, when they skim the cream from a pan of milk, afterwards licking their creamy tails ; but his tail only penetrated into the hot steam, and then he sprang hastily down from the hearth.

"Of course — certainly you are my Queen," he said. "We 'll adjourn the question of the soup till our golden wedding in fifty years' time, so that the poor of my subjects, who will then be fed, may have something to which they can look forward with pleasure for a long time."

And soon the wedding was held. But many of the mice said, as they were returning home, that it could not be really called soup of a sausage-stick, but rather soup of a mouse's tail. They said that some of the stories had been very cleverly told ; but the whole thing might have been different. "*I* should have told it so — and so — and so !"

Thus said the critics, who are always wise — after the fact.

And this story went out into the wide world, everywhere ; and opinions varied concerning it, but the story remained as it was. And that's the best in great things and in small, so also with regard to soup of a sausage-stick — not to expect any thanks for it.



THE WILD SWANS.

FAR away, where the swallows fly when our winter comes on, lived a King who had eleven sons, and one daughter named Eliza. The eleven brothers were Princes, and each went to school with a star on his breast and his sword by his side. They wrote with pencils of diamond upon slates of gold, and learned by heart just as well as they read; one could see directly that they were Princes. Their sister Eliza sat upon a little stool of plate-glass, and had a picture-book which had been bought for the value of half a kingdom.

O, the children were particularly well off; but it was not always to remain so.

Their father, who was king of the whole country, married a bad Queen who did not love the poor children at all. On the very first day they could notice this. In the whole palace there was great feasting, and the children were playing there. Then guests came; but instead of the children receiving, as they had been accustomed to do, all the spare cake and all the roasted apples, they only had some sand given them in a tea-cup, and were told that they might make believe that was something good.

The next week the Queen took the little sister Eliza into the country, to a peasant and his wife; and but a short time had elapsed before she told the King so many falsehoods about the poor Princes, that he did not trouble himself any more about them.

"Fly out into the world and get your own living," said the wicked Queen. "Fly like great birds without a voice."

But she could not make it so bad for them as she had intended, for they became eleven magnificent wild swans. With a strange cry they flew out of the palace windows, far over the park and into the wood.

It was yet quite early morning when they came by the place where their sister Eliza lay asleep in the peasant's room. Here they hovered over the roof, turned their long necks, and flapped their wings; but no one heard or saw it. They were obliged to fly on, high up toward the clouds, far away into the wide world; there they flew into a great dark wood, which stretched away to the sea-shore.

Poor little Eliza stood in the peasant's room and played with a green leaf, for she had no other playthings. And she pricked a hole in the leaf, and looked through it up at the sun, and it seemed to her that she saw her brothers' clear eyes; each time the warm sun shone upon her cheeks she thought of all the kisses they had given her.

Each day passed just like the rest. When the wind swept through the great rose-hedges outside the house, it seemed to whisper to them, "What can be more beautiful than you?" But the roses shook their heads, and answered, "Eliza!" And when the old woman sat in front of her door on Sunday and read in her hymn-book, the wind turned the leaves and said to the book, "Who can be more pious than you?" and the hymn-book said, "Eliza!" And what the rose-bushes and the hymn-book said was the simple truth.

When she was fifteen years old she was to go home. And when the Queen saw how beautiful she was, she became spiteful, and filled with hatred toward her. She would have been glad to change her into a wild swan, like her brothers, but she did not dare to do so at once, because the King wished to see his daughter.

Early in the morning the Queen went into the bath, which was built of white marble, and decked with soft cushions and the most splendid tapestry; and she took three toads and kissed them, and said to the first, —

"Sit upon Eliza's head when she comes into the bath, that she may become as stupid as you. Seat yourself upon her forehead," she said to the second, "that she may become as ugly as you, and her father may not know her. Rest on her heart," she whispered to the third, "that she may receive an evil mind and suffer pain from it."

Then she put the toads into the clear water, which at once assumed a green color; and calling Eliza, caused her to undress and step into the water. And while Eliza dived, one of the toads sat upon her hair, and the second on her forehead, and the third on her heart; but she did not seem to notice it; and as soon as she rose, three red poppies were floating on the water. If the creatures had not been poisonous, and if the witch had not kissed them, they would have been changed into red roses. But at any rate they became flowers, because they had rested on the girl's head, and forehead, and heart. She was too good and innocent for sorcery to have power over her.

When the wicked Queen saw that, she rubbed Eliza with walnut juice, so that the girl became dark brown, and smeared a hurtful ointment on her face, and let her beautiful hair hang in confusion. It was quite impossible to recognize the pretty Eliza.

When her father saw her he was much shocked, and declared this was not his daughter. No one but the yard dog and the swallows would recognize her; but they were poor animals who had nothing to say in the matter.

Then poor Eliza wept, and thought of her eleven brothers who were all away. Sorrowfully she crept out of the castle, and walked all day over field and moor till she came into the great wood. She did not know whither she wished to go, only she felt very downcast, and longed for her brothers: they had certainly been, like herself, thrust forth into the world, and she would seek for them and find them.

She had been only a short time in the wood when the night

fell; she quite lost the path, therefore she lay down upon the soft moss, prayed her evening prayer, and leaned her head against the stump of a tree. Deep silence reigned around, the air was mild, and in the grass and in the moss gleamed like a green fire hundreds of glow-worms; when she lightly touched one of the twigs with her hand, the shining insects fell down upon her like shooting stars.

The whole night long she dreamed of her brothers. They were children again playing together, writing with their diamond pencils upon their golden slates, and looking at the beautiful picture-book which had cost half a kingdom. But on the slates they were not writing, as they had been accustomed to do, lines and letters, but the brave deeds they had done, and all they had seen and experienced; and in the picture-book everything was alive — the birds sang, and the people went out of the book and spoke with Eliza and her brothers. But when the leaf was turned, they jumped back again directly, so that there should be no confusion.

When she awoke the sun was already standing high. She could certainly not see it, for the lofty trees spread their branches far and wide above her. But the rays played there above like a gauzy veil, there was a fragrance from the fresh verdure, and the birds almost perched upon her shoulders. She heard the plashing of water; it was from a number of springs all flowing into a lake which had the most delightful sandy bottom. It was surrounded by thick growing bushes, but at one part the stags had made a large opening, and here Eliza went down to the water. The lake was so clear, that if the wind had not stirred the branches and the bushes, so that they moved, one would have thought they were painted upon the depths of the lake, so clearly was every leaf mirrored, whether the sun shone upon it or whether it lay in shadow.

When Eliza saw her own face she was terrified — so brown and ugly was she; but when she wetted her little hand and rubbed her eyes and her forehead, the white skin gleamed forth again. Then she undressed and went down into the fresh water: a more beautiful king's daughter than she was could not be found in the world. And when she had dressed

herself again and plaited her long hair, she went to the bubbling spring, drank out of the hollow of her hand, and then wandered into the wood, not knowing whither she went. She thought of her dear brothers, and knew that Heaven would certainly not forsake her. It is God who lets the wild apples grow, to satisfy the hungry. He showed her a wild apple-tree, with the boughs bending under the weight of the fruit. Here she took her midday meal, placing props under the boughs, and then went into the darkest part of the forest. There it was so still that she could hear her own footsteps, as well as the rustling of every dry leaf which bent under her feet. Not one bird was to be seen, not one ray of sunlight could find its way through the great dark boughs of the trees; the lofty trunks stood so close together that when she looked before her it appeared as though she were surrounded by sets of palings one behind the other. O, here was a solitude such as she had never before known!

The night came on quite dark. Not a single glow-worm now gleamed in the grass. Sorrowfully she lay down to sleep. Then it seemed to her as if the branches of the trees parted above her head, and mild eyes of angels looked down upon her from on high.

When the morning came, she did not know if it had really been so or if she had dreamed it.

She went a few steps forward, and then she met an old woman with berries in her basket, and the old woman gave her a few of them. Eliza asked the dame if she had not seen eleven Princes riding through the wood.

"No," replied the old woman, "but yesterday I saw eleven swans swimming in the river close by, with golden crowns on their heads."

And she led Eliza a short distance farther, to a declivity, and at the foot of the slope a little river wound its way. The trees on its margin stretched their long leafy branches across toward each other, and where their natural growth would not allow them to come together the roots had been torn out of the ground, and hung, intermingled with the branches, over the water.

Eliza said farewell to the old woman, and went beside the

river to the place where the stream flowed out to the great open ocean.

The whole glorious sea lay before the young girl's eyes, but not one sail appeared upon its surface, and not a boat was to be seen. How was she to proceed? She looked at the innumerable little pebbles on the shore; the water had worn them all round. Glass, iron-stones, everything that was there, had received its shape from the water, which was much softer than even her delicate hand.

"It rolls on unweariedly, and thus what is hard becomes smooth. I will be just as unwearied. Thanks for your lesson, you clear rolling waves; my heart tells me that one day you will lead me to my dear brothers."

On the foam-covered sea-grass lay eleven white swan feathers, which she collected into a bunch. Drops of water were upon them — whether they were dew-drops or tears nobody could tell. Solitary it was there on the strand, but she did not feel it, for the sea showed continual changes — more in a few hours than the lovely lakes can produce in a whole year. Then a great black cloud came. It seemed as if the sea would say, "I can look angry too;" and then the wind blew, and the waves turned their white side outward. But when the clouds gleamed red and the winds slept, the sea looked like a rose leaf; sometimes it became green, sometimes white. But however quietly it might rest, there was still a slight motion on the shore; the water rose gently like the breast of a sleeping child.

When the sun was just about to set, Eliza saw eleven wild swans, with crowns on their heads, flying toward the land: they swept along one after the other, so that they looked like a long white band. Then Eliza descended the slope and hid herself behind a bush. The swans alighted near her and flapped their great white wings.

As soon as the sun had disappeared beneath the water, the swans' feathers fell off, and eleven handsome Princes, Eliza's brothers, stood there. She uttered a loud cry, for although they were greatly altered, she knew and felt that it must be they. And she sprang into their arms and called them by their names; and the Princes felt supremely happy when they

saw their little sister again; and they knew her, though she was now tall and beautiful. They smiled and wept; and soon they understood how cruel their step-mother had been to them all.

"We brothers," said the eldest, "fly about as wild swans as long as the sun is in the sky, but directly it sinks down we receive our human form again. Therefore we must always take care that we have a resting-place for our feet when the sun sets, for if at that moment we were flying up toward the clouds, we should sink down into the deep as men. We do not dwell here; there lies a land just as fair as this beyond the sea. But the way thither is long; we must cross the great sea, and on our path there is no island where we could pass the night, only a little rock stands forth in the midst of the waves; it is but just large enough for us to rest upon it close to each other. If the sea is rough, the foam spurts far over us, but we thank God for the rock. There we pass the night in our human form; but for this rock we could never visit our beloved native land, for we require two of the longest days in the year for our journey. Only once in each year is it granted to us to visit our home. For eleven days we may stay here and fly over the great wood, from whence we can see the palace in which we were born, and in which our father lives, and the high church tower, beneath whose shade our mother lies buried. Here it seems to us as though the bushes and trees were our relatives; here the wild horses career across the steppe, as we have seen them do in our childhood; here the charcoal-burner sings the old songs to which we danced as children; here is our father-land; hither we feel ourselves drawn, and here we have found you, our dear little sister. Two days more we may stay here; then we must away across the sea to a glorious land, but which is not our native land. How can we bear you away? for we have neither ship nor boat."

"In what way can I release you?" asked the sister; and they conversed nearly the whole night, only slumbering for a few hours.

She was awakened by the rustling of the swans' wings above her head. Her brothers were again enchanted, and

they flew in wide circles and at last far away; but one of them, the youngest, remained behind, and the swan laid his head in her lap, and she stroked his wings; and the whole day they remained together. Towards evening the others came back and when the sun had gone down they stood there in their own shapes.

"To-morrow we fly far away from here, and cannot come back until a whole year has gone by. But we cannot leave you thus! Have you courage to come with us? My arm is strong enough to carry you in the wood; and should not all our wings be strong enough to fly with you over the sea?"

"Yes, take me with you," said Eliza.

The whole night they were occupied in weaving a net of the pliable willow bark and tough reeds; and it was great and strong. On this net Eliza lay down; and when the sun rose, and her brothers were changed into wild swans, they seized the net with their beaks, and flew with their beloved sister, who was still asleep, high up toward the clouds. The sunbeams fell exactly upon her face, so one of the swans flew over her head, that his broad wings might overshadow her.

They were far away from the shore when Eliza awoke: she was still dreaming, so strange did it appear to her to be carried high through the air and over the sea. By her side lay a branch with beautiful ripe berries, and a bundle of sweet-tasting roots. The youngest of the brothers had collected them and placed them there for her. She smiled at him thankfully, for she recognized him; he it was who flew over her and shaded her with his wings.

They were so high that the greatest ship they descried beneath them seemed like a white sea-gull lying upon the waters. A great cloud stood behind them — it was a perfect mountain; and upon it Eliza saw her own shadow and those of the eleven swans; there they flew on, gigantic in size. Here was a picture, a more splendid one than she had ever yet seen. But as the sun rose higher and the cloud was left farther behind them, the floating, shadowy images vanished away.

The whole day they flew onward through the air, like a whirring arrow, but their flight was slower than it was wont to be, for they had their sister to carry. Bad weather came on;

the evening drew near; Eliza looked anxiously at the setting sun, for the lonely rock in the ocean could not be seen. It seemed to her as if the swans beat the air more strongly with their wings. Alas! she was the cause that they did not advance fast enough. When the sun went down, they must become men and fall into the sea and drown. Then she prayed a prayer from the depths of her heart; but still she could descry no rock. The dark clouds came nearer in a great, black, threatening body, rolling forward like a mass of lead, and the lightning burst forth, flash upon flash.

Now the sun just touched the margin of the sea. Eliza's heart trembled. Then the swans darted downward, so swiftly that she thought they were falling, but they paused again. The sun was half hidden below the water. And now for the first time she saw the little rock beneath her, and it looked no larger than a seal might look, thrusting his head forth from the water. The sun sank very fast; at last it appeared only like a star; and then her foot touched the firm land. The sun was extinguished like the last spark in a piece of burned paper; her brothers were standing around her, arm in arm, but there was not more than just enough room for her and for them. The sea beat against the rock and went over her like small rain; the sky glowed in continual fire, and peal on peal the thunder rolled; but sister and brothers held each other by the hand and sang psalms, from which they gained comfort and courage.

In the morning twilight the air was pure and calm. As soon as the sun rose the swans flew away with Eliza from the island. The sea still ran high, and when they soared up aloft the white foam looked like millions of white swans swimming upon the water.

When the sun mounted higher, Eliza saw before her, half floating in the air, a mountainous country with shining masses of ice on its water, and in the midst of it rose a castle, apparently a mile long, with row above row of elegant columns, while beneath waved the palm woods and bright flowers as large as mill-wheels. She asked if this was the country to which they were bound, but the swans shook their heads, for what she beheld was the gorgeous, ever-changing palace of

Fata Morgana, and into this they might bring no human being. As Eliza gazed at it, mountains, woods, and castle fell down, and twenty proud churches, all nearly alike, with high towers and pointed windows, stood before them. She fancied she heard the organs sounding, but it was the sea she heard. When she was quite near the churches they changed to a fleet sailing beneath her, but when she looked down it was only a sea-mist gliding over the ocean. Thus she had a continual change before her eyes, till at last she saw the real land to which they were bound. There arose the most glorious blue mountains, with cedar forests, cities, and palaces. Long before the sun went down she sat on the rock, in front of a great cave overgrown with delicate green trailing plants looking like embroidered carpets.

"Now we shall see what you will dream of here to-night," said the youngest brother; and he showed her to her bed-chamber.

"Heaven grant that I may dream of a way to release you," she replied.

And this thought possessed her mightily, and she prayed ardently for help; yes, even in her sleep she continued to pray. Then it seemed to her as if she were flying high in the air to the cloudy palace of Fata Morgana; and the fairy came out to meet her, beautiful and radiant; and yet the fairy was quite like the old woman who had given her the berries in the wood, and had told her of the swans with golden crowns on their heads.

"Your brothers can be released," said she. "But have you courage and perseverance? Certainly, water is softer than your delicate hands, and yet it changes the shape of stones; but it feels not the pain that your fingers will feel; it has no heart, and cannot suffer the agony and torment you will have to endure. Do you see the stinging-nettle which I hold in my hand? Many of the same kind grow around the cave in which you sleep: those only, and those that grow upon church-yard graves, are serviceable, — remember that. Those you must pluck, though they will burn your hands into blisters. Break these nettles to pieces with your feet, and you will have flax; of this you must plait and weave eleven

shirts of mail with long sleeves: throw these over the eleven swans, and the charm will be broken. But recollect well, from the moment you begin this work until it is finished, even though it should take years to accomplish, you must not speak. The first word you utter will pierce your brothers' hearts like a deadly dagger. Their lives hang on your tongue. Remember all this!"

And she touched her hand with the nettle; it was like a burning fire, and Eliza woke with the smart. It was broad daylight; and close by the spot where she had slept lay a nettle like the one she had seen in her dream. She fell upon her knees and prayed gratefully, and went forth from the cave to begin her work.

With her delicate hands she groped among the ugly nettles. These stung like fire, burning great blisters on her arms and hands; but she thought she would bear it gladly if she could only release her dear brothers. Then she bruised every nettle with her bare feet and plaited the green flax.

When the sun had set her brothers came, and they were frightened when they found her dumb. They thought it was some new sorcery of their wicked stepmother's; but when they saw her hands, they understood what she was doing for their sake, and the youngest brother wept. And where his tears dropped she felt no more pain, and the burning blisters vanished.

She passed the night at her work, for she could not sleep till she had delivered her dear brothers. The whole of the following day, while the swans were away, she sat in solitude, but never had time flown so quickly with her as now. One shirt of mail was already finished, and now she began the second.

Then a hunting-horn sounded among the hills, and she was struck with fear. The noise came nearer and nearer; she heard the barking dogs, and timidly she fled into the cave, bound into a bundle the nettles she had collected and prepared, and sat upon the bundle.

Immediately a great dog came bounding out of the ravine, and then another, and another; they barked loudly, ran back, and then came again. Only a few minutes had passed before

all the huntsmen stood before the cave, and the handsomest of them was the King of the country. He came forward to Eliza, for he had never seen a more beautiful maiden.

"How did you come hither, you delightful child?" he asked.

Eliza shook her head, for she might not speak — it would cost her brothers their deliverance and their lives. And she hid her hands under her apron, so that the King might not see what she was suffering.

"Come with me," said he. "You cannot stop here. If you are as good as you are beautiful, I will dress you in velvet and silk, and place the golden crown on your head, and you shall dwell in my richest castle, and rule."

And then he lifted her on his horse. She wept and wrung her hands; but the King said: —

"I only wish for your happiness; one day you will thank me for this."

And then he galloped away among the mountains with her on his horse, and the hunters galloped at their heels.

When the sun went down, the fair, regal city lay before them, with its churches and cupolas; and the King led her into the castle, where great fountains plashed in the lofty marble halls, and where walls and ceilings were covered with glorious pictures. But she had no eyes for all this — she only wept and mourned. Passively she let the women put royal robes upon her, and weave pearls in her hair, and draw dainty gloves over her blistered fingers.

When she stood there in full array, she was dazzlingly beautiful, so that the court bowed deeper than ever. And the King chose her for his bride, although the Archbishop shook his head and whispered that the beauteous, fresh maid was certainly a witch, who blinded the eyes and led astray the heart of the King.

But the King gave no ear to this, but ordered that the music should sound, and the costliest dishes should be served, and the most beautiful maidens should dance before them. And she was led through fragrant gardens into gorgeous halls; but never a smile came upon her lips or shone in her eyes: there she stood, a picture of grief. Then the King

opened a little chamber close by, where she was to sleep. This chamber was decked with splendid green tapestry, and completely resembled the cave in which she had been. On the floor lay the bundle of flax which she had prepared from the nettles, and under the ceiling hung the shirt of mail she had completed. All these things one of the huntsmen had brought with him as curiosities.

"Here you may dream yourself back in your former home," said the King. "Here is the work which occupied you there, nd now, in the midst of all your splendor, it will amuse you to think of that time."

When Eliza saw this that lay so near her heart, a smile played round her mouth and the crimson blood came back into her cheeks. She thought of her brothers' deliverance, and kissed the King's hand; and he pressed her to his heart, and caused the marriage feast to be announced by all the church bells. The beautiful dumb girl out of the wood was to become the Queen of the country.

Then the Archbishop whispered evil words into the King's ear, but they did not sink into the King's heart. The marriage would take place; the Archbishop himself was obliged to place the crown on her head, and with wicked spite he pressed the narrow circlet so tightly upon her brow that it pained her. But a heavier ring lay close around her heart — sorrow for her brothers; she did not feel the bodily pain. Her mouth was dumb, for a single word would cost her brothers their lives, but her eyes glowed with love for the kind, handsome King, who did everything to rejoice her. She loved him with her whole heart, more and more every day. O that she had been able to confide in him and to tell him of her grief! But she was compelled to be dumb, and to finish her work in silence. Therefore at night she crept away from his side, and went quietly into the little chamber which was decorated like the cave, and wove one shirt of mail after another. But when she began the seventh she had no flax left.

She knew that in the church-yard nettles were growing that she could use; but she must pluck them herself, and how was she to go out there?

"O, what is the pain in my fingers to the torment my heart endures?" thought she. "I must venture it, and help will not be denied me!"

With a trembling heart, as though the deed she purposed doing had been evil, she crept into the garden in the moonlight night, and went through the lanes and through the deserted streets to the church-yard. There, on one of the broadest tombstones, she saw sitting a circle of lamias. These hideous wretches took off their ragged garments, as if they were going to bathe; then with their skinny fingers they clawed open the fresh graves, and with fiendish greed they snatched up the corpses and ate the flesh. Eliza was obliged to pass close by them, and they fastened their evil glances upon her; but she prayed silently, and collected the burning nettles, and carried them into the castle.

Only one person had seen her, and that was the Archbishop. He was awake while others slept. Now he felt sure his opinion was correct, that all was not as it should be with the Queen; she was a witch, and thus she had bewitched the King and the whole people.

In secret he told the King what he had seen and what he feared; and when the hard words came from his tongue, the pictures of saints in the cathedral shook their heads, as though they could have said, "It is not so! Eliza is innocent!" But the Archbishop interpreted this differently — he thought they were bearing witness against her, and shaking their heads at her sinfulness. Then two heavy tears rolled down the King's cheeks; he went home with doubt in his heart, and at night pretended to be asleep; but no quiet sleep came upon his eyes, for he noticed that Eliza got up. Every night she did this, and each time he followed her silently, and saw how she disappeared from her chamber.

From day to day his face became darker. Eliza saw it, but did not understand the reason; but it frightened her — and what did she not suffer in her heart for her brothers? Her hot tears flowed upon the royal velvet and purple; they lay there like sparkling diamonds, and all who saw the splendor wished they were queens. In the mean time she had almost finished her work. Only one shirt of mail was still

to be completed, but she had no flax left, and not a single nettle. Once more, for the last time, therefore, she must go to the church-yard, only to pluck a few handfuls. She thought with terror of this solitary wandering and of the horrible lamias, but her will was firm as her trust in Providence.

Eliza went on, but the King and the Archbishop followed her. They saw her vanish into the church-yard through the wicket-gate; and when they drew near, the lamias were sitting upon the tomb-stone as Eliza had seen them; and the King turned aside, for he fancied her among them, whose head had rested against his breast that very evening.

"The people must condemn her," said he.

And the people condemned her to suffer death by fire.

Out of the gorgeous regal halls she was led into a dark, damp cell, where the wind whistled through the grated window; instead of velvet and silk they gave her the bundle of nettles which she had collected; on this she could lay her head; and the hard, burning coats of mail which she had woven were to be her coverlet. But nothing could have been given her that she liked better. She resumed her work and prayed. Without, the street boys were singing jeering songs about her, and not a soul comforted her with a kind word.

But toward evening there came the whirring of a swan's wings close by the grating — it was the youngest of her brothers. He had found his sister, and she sobbed aloud with joy, though she knew that the approaching night would probably be the last she had to live. But now the work was almost finished, and her brothers were here.

Now came the Archbishop, to stay with her in her last hour, for he had promised the King to do so. And she shook her head, and with looks and gestures she begged him to depart, for in this night she must finish her work, or else all would be in vain, all her tears, her pain, and her sleepless nights. The Archbishop withdrew, uttering evil words against her; but poor Eliza knew she was innocent, and continued her work.

It was still twilight; not till an hour afterward would the sun rise. And the eleven brothers stood at the castle gate, and demanded to be brought before the King. That could

not be, they were told, for it was still almost night; the King was asleep, and might not be disturbed. They begged, they threatened, and the sentries came, yes, even the King himself came out, and asked what was the meaning of this. At that moment the sun rose, and no more were the brothers to be seen, but eleven wild swans flew away over the castle.

All the people came flocking out at the town gate, for they wanted to see the witch burned. An old horse drew the cart on which she sat. They had put upon her a garment of coarse sackcloth. Her lovely hair hung loose about her beautiful head; her cheeks were as pale as death; and her lips moved silently, while her fingers were engaged with the green flax. Even on the way to death she did not interrupt the work she had begun; the ten shirts of mail lay at her feet, and she wrought at the eleventh. The mob derided her.

"Look at the red witch, how she mutters! She has no hymn-book in her hand; no, there she sits with her ugly sorcery — tear it in a thousand pieces!"

And they all pressed upon her, and wanted to tear up the shirts of mail. Then eleven wild swans came flying up, and sat round about her on the cart, and beat with their wings; and the mob gave way before them, terrified.

"That is a sign from Heaven! She is certainly innocent!" whispered many. But they did not dare to say it aloud.

Now the executioner seized her by the hand; then she hastily threw the eleven shirts over the swans, and immediately eleven handsome Princes stood there. But the youngest had a swan's wing instead of an arm, for a sleeve was wanting to his shirt — she had not quite finished it.

"Now I may speak!" she said. "I am innocent!"

And the people who saw what happened bowed before her as before a saint; but she sank lifeless into her brothers' arms, such an effect had suspense, anguish, and pain had upon her.

"Yes, she is innocent," said the eldest brother.

And now he told everything that had taken place; and while he spoke a fragrance arose as of millions of roses, for every piece of fagot in the pile had taken root and was sending forth shoots; and a fragrant hedge stood there, tall and great, covered with red roses, and at the top a flower, white

and shining, gleaming like a star. This flower the King plucked and placed in Eliza's bosom; and she arose with peace and happiness in her heart.

And all the church bells rang of themselves, and the birds came in great flocks. And back to the castle went such a marriage-procession as no King had ever seen.

THE BEETLE.

THE Emperor's favorite horse was shod with gold. It had a golden shoe on each of its feet.

And why was this?

He was a beautiful creature, with delicate legs, bright intelligent eyes, and a mane that hung down his neck like a veil. He had carried his master through the fire and smoke of battle, and heard the bullets whistling around him; had kicked, bitten, and taken part in the fight when the enemy advanced; and had sprung, with his master on his back, over the fallen foe, and had saved the crown of red gold, and the life of the Emperor, which was more valuable than the red gold; and that is why the Emperor's horse had golden shoes.

And the Beetle came creeping forth.

"First the great ones," said he, "and then the little ones; but greatness is not the only thing that does it." And so saying, he stretched out his thin legs.

"And pray what do you want?" asked the Smith.

"Golden shoes," replied the Beetle.

"Why, you must be out of your senses," cried the Smith. "Do you want to have golden shoes, too?"

"Golden shoes," replied the Beetle. "Am I not just as good as that big creature yonder, that is waited on, and brushed, and has meat and drink put before him? Don't I belong to the imperial stable?"

"But *why* is the horse to have golden shoes? Don't you understand that?" asked the Smith.

"Understand? I understand that it is a personal slight offered to myself," cried the Beetle. "It is done to annoy me, and therefore I am going into the world to seek my fortune."

"Go along!" said the Smith.

"You're a rude fellow!" cried the Beetle: and then he went out of the stable, flew a little way, and soon afterward found himself in a beautiful flower-garden, all fragrant with roses and lavender.

"Is it not beautiful here?" asked one of the little Lady-birds that flew about, with their delicate wings and their red and black shields on their backs. "How sweet it is here — how beautiful it is!"

"I'm accustomed to better things," said the Beetle. "Do you call *this* beautiful? Why, there is not so much as a dung-heap."

Then he went on, under the shadow of a great stack, and found a caterpillar crawling along.

"How beautiful the world is!" said the Caterpillar: "the sun is so warm, and everything so enjoyable! And when I go to sleep, and die, as they call it, I shall wake up as a butterfly, with beautiful wings to fly with."

"How conceited you are!" exclaimed the Beetle. "*You* fly about as a butterfly, indeed! I've come out of the stable of the Emperor, and no one there, not even the Emperor's favorite horse — that by the way wears my cast off golden shoes — has any such idea. To have wings to fly! why we can fly now;" and he spread his wings and flew away. "I don't want to be annoyed, and yet I am annoyed," he said, as he flew off.

Soon afterward he fell down upon a great lawn. For a while he lay there and feigned slumber; at last he fell asleep in earnest.

Suddenly a shower of rain came pattering from the clouds. The Beetle woke up at the noise, and wanted to escape into the earth, but could not. He was tumbled over and over: sometimes he was swimming on his stomach, sometimes on his back, and as for flying, that was out of the question; he doubted whether he should escape from the place with his life. He therefore remained lying where he was.

When the weather had moderated a little, and the Beetle had rubbed the water out of his eyes, he saw something gleaming. It was linen that had been placed there to bleach. He managed to make his way up to it, and crept into a fold of the damp linen. Certainly the place was not so comfortable to lie in as the warm stable; but there was no better to be had, and therefore he remained lying there for a whole day and a whole night, and the rain kept on during all the time. Toward

morning he crept forth: he was very much out of temper about the climate.

On the linen two frogs were sitting. Their bright eyes absolutely gleamed with pleasure.

"Wonderful weather this!" one of them cried. "How refreshing! And the linen keeps the water together so beautifully. My hind legs seem to quiver as if I were going to swim."

"I should like to know," said the second, "if the swallow, who flies so far round in her many journeys in foreign lands, ever meets with a better climate than this. What delicious dampness! It is really as if one were lying in a wet ditch. Whoever does not rejoice in this, certainly does not love his father-land."

"Have you been in the Emperor's stable?" asked the Beetle. "There the dampness is warm and refreshing. That's the climate for me; but I cannot take it with me on my journey. Is there never a muck-heap here in the garden, where a person of rank, like myself, can feel himself at home, and take up his quarters?"

But the Frogs either did not or would not understand him.

"I never ask a question twice!" said the Beetle, after he had already asked this one three times without receiving any answer.

Then he went a little further, and stumbled against a fragment of pottery, that certainly ought not to have been lying there; but as it was once there, it gave a good shelter against wind and weather. Here dwelt several families of earwigs; and these did not require much, only sociality, The female members of the community were full of the purest maternal affection, and accordingly each one considered her own child the most beautiful and clever of all.

"Our son has engaged himself," said one mother. "Dear, innocent boy! His greatest hope is that he may creep one day into a clergyman's ear. It 's very artless and lovable, that; and being engaged will keep him steady. What joy for a mother!"

"Our son," said another mother, "had scarcely crept out of the egg, when he was already off on his travels. He's all life

and spirits; he'll run his horns off! What joy that is for a mother! Is it not so, Mr. Beetle?" for she knew the stranger by his horny coat.

"You are both quite right," said he; so they begged him to walk in, — that is to say, to come as far as he could under the bit of pottery.

"Now, you also see *my* little earwig," observed a third mother and a fourth; "they are lovely little things, and highly amusing. They are never ill-behaved, except when they are uncomfortable in their inside; but, unfortunately, one is very subject to that at their age."

Thus each mother spoke of her baby; and the babies talked among themselves, and made use of the little nippers they have in their tails to nip the beard of the Beetle.

"Yes, they are always busy about something, the little rogues!" said the mothers; and they quite beamed with maternal pride; but the Beetle felt bored by it, and therefore he inquired how far it was to the nearest muck-heap.

"That is quite out in the big world, on the other side of the ditch," answered an Earwig. "I hope none of my children will go so far, for it would be the death of me."

"But *I* shall try to get so far," said the Beetle; and he went off without taking formal leave; for that is considered the polite thing to do. And by the ditch he met several friends, — beetles, all of them.

"Here we live," they said. "We are very comfortable here. Might we ask you to step down into this rich mud? You must be fatigued after your journey."

"Certainly," replied the Beetle. "I have been exposed to the rain, and have had to lie upon linen, and cleanliness is a thing that greatly exhausts me. I have also pains in one of my wings, from sitting in a draught under a fragment of pottery. It is really quite refreshing to be among one's companions once more."

"Perhaps you come from a muck-heap?" observed the oldest of them.

"Indeed, I come from a much higher place," replied the Beetle. "I came from the Emperor's stable, where I was born with golden shoes on my feet. I am travelling on a se-

cret embassy. You must not ask me any questions, for I can't betray my secret."

With this the Beetle stepped down into the rich mud. There sat three young maiden Beetles; and they tittered, because they did not know what to say.

"Not one of them is engaged yet," said their mother; and the Beetle maidens tittered again, this time from embarrassment.

"I have never seen greater beauties in the royal stables," exclaimed the Beetle, who was now resting himself.

"Don't spoil my girls," said the mother; "and don't talk to them, please, unless you have serious intentions. But of course your intentions are serious, and therefore I give you my blessing."

"Hurrah!" cried all the other Beetles together; and our friend was engaged. Immediately after the betrothal came the marriage, for there was no reason for delay.

The following day passed pleasantly, and the next in tolerable comfort; but on the third it was time to think of food for the wife, and perhaps for children.

"I have allowed myself to be taken in," said our Beetle to himself. "And now there's nothing for it but to take *them* in, in turn."

So said, so done. Away he went, and he stayed away all day, and stayed away all night; and his wife sat there, a forsaken widow.

"O," said the other Beetles, "this fellow whom we received into our family is nothing more than a thorough vagabond. He has gone away, and has left his wife a burden upon our hands."

"Well, then, she shall be unmarried again, and sit here among my daughters," said the mother. "Fie on the villain who forsook her!"

In the mean time, the Beetle had been journeying on, and had sailed across the ditch on a cabbage-leaf. In the morning two persons came to the ditch. When they saw him, they took him up, and turned him over, and looked very learned, especially one of them — a boy.

"Allah sees the black beetle in the black stone and in the

black rock. Is not that written in the Koran?" Then he translated the Beetle's name into Latin, and enlarged upon the creature's nature and history. The second person, an older scholar, voted for carrying him home. He said they wanted just such good specimens; this seemed an uncivil speech to our Beetle, and in consequence he flew suddenly out of the speaker's hand. As he now had dry wings, he flew a tolerable distance, and reached a hot-bed, where a sash of the glass roof was partly open, so he quietly slipped in and buried himself in the warm earth.

"Very comfortable it is here," said he.

Soon after he went to sleep, and dreamed that the Emperor's favorite horse had fallen, and had given him his golden shoes, with the promise that he should have two more.

That was all very charming. When the Beetle woke up, he crept forth and looked around him. What splendor was in the hot-house! In the background great palm-trees growing up on high; the sun made them look transparent; and beneath them what a luxuriance of green, and of beaming flowers, red as fire, yellow as amber, or white as fresh-fallen snow?

"This is an incomparable plenty of plants," cried the Beetle. "How good they will taste when they are decayed! A capital store-room this! There must certainly be relations of mine living here. I will just see if I can find any one with whom I may associate. I'm proud, certainly, and I'm proud of being so."

And so he prowled about in the earth, and thought what a pleasant dream that was about the dying horse, and the golden shoes he had inherited.

Suddenly, a hand seized the Beetle, and pressed him, and turned him round and round.

The gardener's little son and a companion had come to the hot-bed, had espied the Beetle, and wanted to have their fun with him. First, he was wrapped in a vine-leaf, and then put into warm trousers pocket. He cribbled and crabbled about there with all his might; but he got a good pressing from the boy's hand for this, which served as a hint to him to keep quiet. Then the boy went rapidly toward the great lake that lay at the end of the garden. Here the Beetle was put in an

old broken wooden shoe, on which a little stick was placed upright for a mast, and to this mast the Beetle was bound with a woolen thread. Now he was a sailor, and had to sail away.

The lake was not very large, but to the Beetle it seemed an ocean; and he was so astonished at its extent, that he fell over on his back, and kicked out with his legs.

The little ship sailed away. The current of the water seized it; but whenever it went too far from the shore, one of the boys turned up his trousers and went in after it, and brought it back to the land. But at length, just as it went merrily out again, the two boys were called away, and very harshly, so that they hurried to obey the summons, ran away from the lake, and left the little ship to its fate. Thus it drove away from the shore, farther and farther into the open sea; it was terrible work for the Beetle, for he could not get away in consequence of being bound to the mast.

Then a fly came and paid him a visit.

"What beautiful weather!" said the Fly. "I'll rest here, and sun myself. You've an agreeable time of it."

"You speak without knowing the facts," replied the Beetle. "Don't you see that I'm a prisoner?"

"Ah! but I'm not a prisoner," observed the Fly; and he flew away accordingly.

"Well, now I know the world," said the Beetle to himself. "It is an abominable world. I'm the only honest person in it. First, they refuse me my golden shoes; then I have to lie on wet linen, and to stand in the draught; and to crown all, they fasten a wife upon me. Then, when I've taken a quick step out into the world, and found out how one can have it there, and how I wished to have it, one of these human boys comes and ties me up, and leaves me to the mercy of the wild waves, while the Emperor's favorite horse prances about proudly in golden shoes. That is what annoys me more than all. But one must not look for sympathy in this world! My career has been very interesting; but what's the use of that, if nobody knows it? The world does not deserve to be made acquainted with my history, for it ought to have given me golden shoes when the Emperor's horse was shod, and I stretched out my feet to be shod too. If I had received

golden shoes, I should have become an ornament to the stable. Now, the stable has lost me, and the world has lost me. It is all over!"

But all was not over yet. A boat, in which there were a few young girls, came rowing up.

"Look, yonder is an old wooden shoe sailing along," said one of the girls.

"There's a little creature bound fast to it," said another.

The boat came quite close to our Beetle's ship, and the young girls fished him out of the water. One of them drew a small pair of scissors from her pocket, and cut the woolen thread, without hurting the Beetle; and when she stepped on shore, she put him down on the grass.

"Creep, creep — fly, fly — if thou canst," she said. "Liberty is a splendid thing."

And the Beetle flew up, and straight through the open window of a great building; there he sank down, tired and exhausted, exactly on the mane of the Emperor's favorite horse, who stood in the stable when he was at home, and the Beetle also. The Beetle clung fast to the mane, and sat there a short time to recover himself.

"Here I'm sitting on the Emperor's favorite horse, — sitting on him, just like the Emperor himself!" he cried. "But what was I saying? Yes, now I remember. That's a good thought, and quite correct. The smith asked me why the golden shoes were given to the horse. Now I'm quite clear about the answer. They were given to the horse on *my* account."

And now the Beetle was in a good temper again.

"Travelling expands the mind rarely," said he.

The sun's rays came streaming into the stable, and shone upon him, and made the place lively and bright.

"The world is not so bad, upon the whole," said the Beetle; "but one must know how to take things as they come."

THE GALOSHES OF FORTUNE.

I.

A Beginning.

IN a house in Copenhagen, not far from the King's New Market, a company — a very large company — had assembled, having received invitations to an evening party there. One half of the company already sat at the card-tables, the other half awaited the result of the hostess's question, "What shall we do now?" They had progressed so far, and the entertainment began to take some degree of animation. Among other subjects the conversation turned upon the Middle Ages. Some considered that period much more interesting than our own times: yes, Councilor Knap defended this view so zealously that the lady of the house went over at once to his side; and both loudly exclaimed against Oersted's treatise in the Almanac on old and modern times, in which the chief advantage is given to our own day. The Councilor considered the

times of the Danish King Hans[1] as the noblest and happiest age.

While the conversation takes this turn, only interrupted for a moment by the arrival of a newspaper, which contained nothing worth reading, we will betake ourselves to the antechamber, where the cloaks, sticks, and galoshes had found a place. Here sat two maids — an old one and a young one. One would have thought they had come to escort their mistresses home; but, on looking at them more closely, the observer could see that they were not ordinary servants: their shapes were too graceful for that, their complexions too delicate, and the cut of their dresses too uncommon. They were two fairies. The younger was not Fortune, but lady's-maid to one of her ladies of the bed-chamber, who carry about the more trifling gifts of Fortune. The elder one looked somewhat more gloomy — she was Care, who always goes herself in her own exalted person to perform her business, for thus she knows that it is well done.

They were telling each other where they had been that day. The messenger of Fortune had only transacted a few unimportant affairs, — as, for instance, she had preserved a new bonnet from a shower of rain, had procured an honest man a bow from a titled nobody, and so on; but what she had still to relate was something quite extraordinary.

"I can likewise tell," said she, "that to-day is my birthday; and in honor of it a pair of galoshes has been intrusted to me, which I am to bring to the human race. These galoshes have the property that every one who puts them on is at once transported to the time and place in which he likes best to be — every wish in reference to time, place, and circumstance is at once fulfilled; and so for once man can be happy here below!"

"Believe me," said Care, "he will be very unhappy, and will bless the moment when he can get rid of the galoshes again."

"What are you thinking of?" retorted the other. "Now I shall put them at the door. Somebody will take them by mistake, and become the happy one!"

You see, that was the dialogue they held.

[1] A. D. 1482–1513.

II.

What happened to the Councilor.

It was late. Councilor Knap, lost in contemplation of the times of King Hans, wished to get home; and fate willed that instead of his own galoshes he should put on those of Fortune, and thus went out into East Street. But by the power of the galoshes he had been put back three hundred years — into the days of King Hans; and therefore he put his foot into mud and mire in the street, because in those days there was not any pavement.

"Why, this is horrible — how dirty it is here!" said the Councilor. "The good pavement is gone, and all the lamps are put out."

The moon did not yet stand high enough to give much light, and the air was tolerably thick, so that all objects seemed to melt together in the darkness. At the next corner a lamp hung before a picture of the Madonna, but the light it gave was as good as none; he only noticed it when he stood just under it, and his eyes fell upon the painted figure.

"That is probably a museum of art," thought he, "where they have forgotten to take down the sign."

A couple of men in the costume of those past days went by him.

"How they look!" he said. "They must come from a masquerade."

Suddenly there was a sound of drums and fifes, and torches gleamed brightly. The Councilor started. And now he saw a strange procession go past. First came a whole troop of drummers, beating their instruments very dexterously; they were followed by men-at-arms, with long-bows and cross-bows. The chief man in the procession was a clerical lord. The astonished Councilor asked what was the meaning of this, and who the man might be.

"That is the Bishop of Zealand."

"What in the world has come to the Bishop?" said the Councilor, with a sigh, shaking his head. "This can not possibly be the Bishop!"

Ruminating on this, and without looking to the right or to the left, the Councilor went through East Street, and over the Highbridge Place. The bridge which led to the Palace Square was not to be found; he perceived the shore of a shallow water, and at length encountered two people, who sat in a boat.

"Do you wish to be ferried over to the Holm, sir?" they asked.

"To the Holm!" repeated the Councilor, who did not know, you see, in what period he was. "I want to go to Christian's Haven and to Little Turf Street."

The men stared at him.

"Pray tell me where the bridge is?" said he. "It is shameful that no lanterns are lighted here; and it is as muddy, too, as if one were walking in a marsh." But the longer he talked with the boatmen the less could he understand them. "I don't understand your Bornholm talk," he at last cried, angrily, and turned his back upon them. He could not find the bridge, nor was there any paling. "It is quite scandalous how things look here!" he said — never had he thought his own times so miserable as this evening. "I think it will be best if I take a cab," thought he. But where were the cabs? — not one was to be seen. "I shall have to go back to the King's New Market, where there are many carriages standing, otherwise I shall never get as far as Christian's Haven."

Now he went toward East Street, and had almost gone through it when the moon burst forth.

"What in the world have they been erecting here!" he exclaimed, when he saw the East Gate, which in those days stood at the end of East Street.

In the mean time, however, he found a passage open, and through this he came out upon our New Market; but it was a broad meadow. Single bushes stood forth, and across the meadow ran a great canal or stream. A few miserable wooden booths for Dutch skippers were erected on the opposite shore.

"Either I behold a Fata Morgana, or I am tipsy," sighed the Councilor. "What can that be? what can that be?"

He turned back in the full persuasion that he must be ill. In walking up the street he looked more closely at the houses; most of them were built of laths, and many were only thatched with straw.

"No, I don't feel well at all!" he lamented. "And yet I only drank one glass of punch! But I cannot stand that; and besides, it was very foolish to give us punch and warm salmon. I shall mention that to our hostess — the agent's lady. Suppose I go back, and say how I feel? But that looks ridiculous, and it is a question if they will be up still."

He looked for the house, but could not find it.

"That is dreadful!" he cried; "I don't know East Street again. Not one shop is to be seen; old, miserable, tumble-down huts are all I see, as if I were at Roeskilde or Ringstedt. O, I am ill! It's no use to make ceremony. But where in all the world is the agent's house? It is no longer the same; but within there are people up still. I certainly must be ill!"

He now reached a half-open door, where the light shone through a chink. It was a tavern of that date — a kind of beer-house. The room had the appearance of a Dutch wine shop; a number of people, consisting of seamen, citizens of Copenhagen, and a few scholars, sat in deep conversation over their jugs, and paid little attention to the new-comer.

"I beg pardon," said the Councilor to the hostess, "but I feel very unwell; would you let them get me a fly to go to Christian's Haven?"

The woman looked at him and shook her head; then she spoke to him in German.

The Councilor now supposed that she did not understand Danish, so he repeated his wish in the German language. This and his costume, convinced the woman that he was a foreigner. She soon understood that he felt unwell, and therefore brought him a jug of water. It certainly tasted a little of sea-water, though it had been taken from the spring outside.

The Councilor leaned his head on his hand, drew a deep breath, and thought of all the strange things that were happening about him.

"Is that to-day's number of the 'Day'?" he said quite mechanically, for he saw that the woman was putting away a large sheet of paper.

She did not understand what he meant, but handed him the leaf: it was a wood-cut representing a strange appearance in the air which had been seen in the city of Cologne.

"That is very old!" said the Councilor, who became quite cheerful at sight of this antiquity. "How did you come by this strange leaf? That is very interesting, although the whole thing is a fable. Nowadays these appearances are explained to be northern lights that have been seen; probably they arise from electricity."

Those who sat nearest to him and heard his speech, looked at him in surprise, and one of them rose, took off his hat respectfully, and said with a very grave face, —

"You must certainly be a very learned man, sir!"

"O no!" replied the Councilor; "I can only say a word or two about things one ought to understand."

"*Modestia* is a beautiful virtue," said the man. "Moreover, I must say to your speech, '*mihi secus videtur;*' yet I will gladly suspend my *judicium.*"

"May I ask with whom I have the pleasure of speaking?" asked the Councilor.

"I am a bachelor of theology," replied the man.

This answer sufficed for the Councilor; the title corresponded with the garb.

"Certainly," he thought, "this must be an old village school-master, a queer character, such as one finds sometimes over in Jutland."

"This is certainly not a *locus docendi*," began the man; "but I beg you to take the trouble to speak. You are doubtless well read in the ancients?"

"O yes," replied the Councilor. "I am fond of reading useful old books; and am fond of the modern ones, too, with the exception of the 'Every-day Stories,' of which we have enough, in all conscience."

"'Every-day Stories?'" said the Bachelor, inquiringly.

"Yes, I mean the new romances we have now."

"O!" said the man, with a smile, "they are very witty, and are much read at court. The King is especially partial to the romance by Messieurs Iffven and Gaudian, which talks about King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. He has jested about it with his noble lords."[1]

"That I have certainly not yet read," said the Councilor: "that must be quite a new book published by Heiberg."

"No," retorted the man, "it is not published by Heiberg, but by Godfrey von Gehmen.[2]

"Indeed! is he the author?" asked the Councilor. "That is a very old name: was not that the name of about the first printer who appeared in Denmark?"

"Why, he *is* our first printer," replied the man.

So far it had gone well. But now one of the men began to speak of a pestilence which he said had been raging a few years ago; he meant the plague of 1484. The Councilor supposed that he meant the cholera, and so the conversation went on tolerably. The Freebooters' War of 1490 was so recent that it could not escape mention. The English pirates had taken ships from the very wharves, said the man; and the Councilor, who was well acquainted with the events of 1801, joined in manfully against the English. The rest of the talk, however, did not pass over so well; every moment there

[1] Holberg relates in his *Stories of Denmark's Kings* that King Hans one day, when he had been reading in the *Romance of King Arthur*, said in jest to his boon companion, Otto Rud, whom he loved much: "These Knights, Iffven and Gaudian, whom I find in this book, must have been wonderful knights, such as one does not find nowadays;" whereupon Otto Rud replied: "If there were such a champion as King Arthur, then would you find many such knights as Iffven and Gaudian."

[2] The first printer and publisher in Denmark, under King Hans.

was a contradiction. The good Bachelor was terribly ignorant, and the simplest assertion of the Councilor seemed too bold or too fantastic. They looked at each other, and when it became too bad, the Bachelor spoke Latin, in the hope that he would be better understood; but it was of no use.

"How are you now?" asked the Hostess, and she plucked the Councilor by the sleeve.

Now his recollection came back; in the course of the conversation he had forgotten everything that had happened.

"Good heavens! where am I?" he said, and he felt dizzy when he thought of it.

"We'll drink claret, mead, and Bremen beer," cried one of the guests, "and you shall drink with us."

Two girls came in. One of them had on a cap of two colors. They poured out drink and bowed; the Councilor felt a cold shudder running all down his back. "What's that? what's that?" he cried; but he was obliged to drink with them. They took possession of the good man quite politely. He was in despair, and when one said that he was tipsy he felt not the slightest doubt regarding the truth of the statement, and only begged them to procure him a droschky. Now they thought he was speaking Muscovite.

Never had he been in such rude, vulgar company.

"One would think the country was falling back into heathenism," was his reflection. "This is the most terrible moment of my life."

But at the same time the idea occurred to him to bend down under the table, and then to creep to the door. He did so; but just as he had reached the entry the others discovered his intention. They seized him by the feet; and now the galoshes, to his great good fortune, came off, and — the whole enchantment vanished.

The Councilor saw quite plainly, in front of him, a lamp burning, and behind it a great building; everything looked familiar and splendid. It was East Street, as we know it now. He lay with his legs turned toward a porch, and opposite to him sat the watchman asleep.

"Good heavens! have I been lying here in the street dreaming?" he exclaimed. "Yes, this is East Street, sure

enough! how splendidly bright and gay! It is terrible what an effect that one glass of punch must have had on me!"

Two minutes afterward he was sitting in a fly, which drove him out to Christian's Haven. He thought of the terror and anxiety he had undergone, and praised from his heart the happy present, our own time, which, with all its shortcomings, was far better than the period in which he had been placed a short time before.

III.

The Watchman's Adventures.

"On my word, yonder lies a pair of galoshes!" said the Watchman. "They must certainly belong to the Lieutenant who lives up-stairs. They are lying close to the door."

The honest man would gladly have rung the bell and delivered them, for up-stairs there was a light still burning; but he did not wish to disturb the other people in the house, and so he let it alone.

"It must be very warm to have a pair of such things on," said he. "How nice and soft the leather is!" They fitted his feet very well. "How droll it is in the world! Now, he might lie down in his warm bed, and yet he does not! There he is, pacing up and down the room. He is a happy man!

He has neither wife nor children, and every evening he is at a party. O, I wish I were he, then I should be a happy man!"

As he uttered the wish, the galoshes he had put on produced their effect, and the Watchman was transported into the body and being of the Lieutenant. Then he stood up in the room, and held a little pink paper in his fingers, on which was a poem,— a poem written by the Lieutenant himself. For who is there who has not, once in his life, had a poetic moment? and at such a moment, if one writes down one's thoughts, there is poetry.

O, WERE I RICH!

"O, were I rich!" Such was my wish, yea such,
When hardly three feet high, I longed for much.
O, were I rich! an officer were I,
With sword, and uniform, and plume so high.
And the time came — an officer was I!
But yet I grew not rich. Alas, poor me!
Have pity Thou, who all man's wants dost see.

I sat one evening sunk in dreams of bliss,
A maid of seven years old gave me a kiss.
I at that time was rich in poesy
And tales of old, though poor as poor could be;
But all she asked for was this poesy.
Then was I rich, but not in gold, poor me!
As Thou dost know, who all men's hearts canst see.

O, were I rich! Oft asked I for this boon.
The child grew up to womanhood full soon.
She is so pretty, clever, and so kind;
O, did she know what's hidden in my mind; —
A tale of old. Would she to me were kind!
But I'm condemned to silence; O, poor me!
As Thou dost know, who all men's hearts canst see.

O, were I rich in calm and peace of mind,
My grief you then would not here written find!
O thou, to whom I do my heart devote,
O, read this page of glad days now remote,
A dark, dark tale, which I to night devote!
Dark is the future now. Alas, poor me!
Have pity Thou, who all men's pains dost see.

Yes, people write poetry when they are in love; but a prudent man does not print such poems. The Lieutenant was in love — and poor — that's a triangle, or, so to speak, the half of a broken square of happiness. The Lieutenant felt that very keenly, and so he laid his head against the window-frame and sighed a deep sigh.

"The poor watchman in the street yonder is far happier than I. He does not know what I call want. He has a home, a wife and children, who weep at his sorrow, and rejoice at his joy. O! I should be happier than I am, could I change my being for his, and pass through life with his humble desires and hopes. Yes, he is happier than I!"

In that same moment the Watchman became a watchman again; for through the power of the galoshes of Fortune, he had assumed the personality of the Lieutenant: but then we know he felt far less content, and preferred to be just what he had despised a short time before. So the Watchman became a watchman again.

"That was an ugly dream," said he, "but droll enough. It seemed to me that I was the Lieutenant up yonder, and that it was not pleasant at all. I was without the wife and the boys, who are now ready to half stifle me with kisses."

He sat down again and nodded. The dream would not go quite out of his thoughts. He had the galoshes still on his feet. A falling star glided down along the horizon.

"There went one," said he, "but for all that, there are enough left. I should like to look at those things a little nearer, especially the moon, for that won't vanish under one's hands. The student for whom my wife washes, says that when we die we fly from one star to another. That's not true, but it would be very nice. If I could only make a little spring up there, then my body might lie here on the stairs for all I care."

Now there are certain assertions we should be very cautious of making in this world, but doubly careful when we have galoshes of Fortune on our feet. Just hear what happened to the Watchman.

So far as we are concerned, we all understand the rapidity of dispatch by steam; we have tried it either in railways, or

in steamers across the sea. But this speed is as the crawling of the sloth, or the march of the snail in comparison with the swiftness with which light travels. That flies nineteen million times quicker. Death is an electric shock we receive in our hearts, and on the wings of electricity the liberated soul flies away. The sunlight requires eight minutes and a few seconds for a journey of more than ninety-five millions of miles; on the wings of electric power the soul requires only a few moments to accomplish the same flight. The space between the orbs of the universe is, for her, not greater than, for us, the distances between the houses of our friends dwelling in the same town, and even living close together. Yet this electric shock costs us the life of the body here below, unless, like the Watchman, we have the magic galoshes on.

In a few seconds the Watchman had traversed the distance of two hundred and sixty thousand miles to the moon, which body, as we know, consists of a much lighter material than that of our earth, and is, as we should say, soft as new-fallen snow. He found himself on one of the many ring mountains with which we are familiar from Dr. Mâdler's great map of the moon. Within the ring, a great bowl-shaped hollow went down to the depth of a couple of miles. At the base of the hollow lay a town, of whose appearance we can only form an idea by pouring the white of an egg into a glass of water; the substance here was just as soft as white of egg, and formed similar towers, and cupolas, and terraces like sails, transparent and floating in the thin air. Our earth hung over his head like a great, dark, red ball.

He immediately became aware of a number of beings, who were certainly what we call "men," but their appearance was very different from ours. A far more correct imagination than that of the pseudo-Herschel [1] had created them. If they had been put up in a row and painted, one would have said, "That's a beautiful arabesque!" They had also a language, but no one could expect that the soul of the Watchman should

[1] This relates to a book published some years ago in Germany, and said to be by Herschel, which contained a description of the moon and its inhabitants, written with such a semblance of truth that many were deceived by the imposture.

understand it. But the Watchman's soul did understand it, for our souls have far greater abilities than we suppose. Does not its wonderful dramatic talent show itself in our dreams? Then every one of our acquaintances appears, speaking in his own character, and with his own voice, in a way that not one of us could imitate in our waking hours. How does our soul bring back to us people of whom we have not thought for many years? Suddenly they come into our souls, with their smallest peculiarities about them. In fact it is a fearful thing, that memory which our souls possess; it can reproduce every sin, every bad thought. And then, it may be asked, shall we be able to give an account of every idle word that has been in our hearts and on our lips?

Thus the Watchman's soul understood the language of the people in the moon very well. They disputed about this earth, and doubted if it could be inhabited; the air, they asserted, must be too thick for a sensible moon-man to live there They considered that the moon alone was peopled; for that, they said, was the real body in which the old-world people dwelt. They also talked of politics.

But let us go down to the East Street, and see how it fared with the body of the Watchman.

He sat lifeless upon the stairs. His pike had fallen out of his hand, and his eyes stared up at the moon, which his honest body was wondering about.

"What's o'clock, Watchman?" asked a passer-by. But the man who didn't answer was the Watchman. Then the passengers tweaked him quite gently by the nose, and then he lost his balance. There lay the body stretched out at full length —the man was dead. All his comrades were very much frightened: dead he was, and dead he remained. It was reported, and it was discussed, and in the morning the body was carried out to the hospital.

That would be a pretty jest for the soul if it should chance to come back, and probably seek its body in the East Street, and not find it! Most likely it would go first to the police and afterward to the address office, that inquiries might be made from thence respecting the missing goods; and then it would wander out to the hospital. But we may console ourselves

with the idea that the soul is most clever when it acts upon its own account; it is the body that makes it stupid.

As we have said, the Watchman's body was taken to the hospital, and brought into the washing-room; and naturally enough, the first thing they did there was to pull off the galoshes; and then the soul had to come back. It took its way directly toward the body, and in a few seconds there was life in the man. He declared that this had been the most terrible night of his life; he would not have such feelings again, not for a shilling; but now it was past and over.

The same day he was allowed to leave; but the galoshes remained at the hospital.

IV.

A Great Moment. — A very Unusual Journey.

Every one who belongs to Copenhagen knows the look of the entrance to the Frederick's Hospital in Copenhagen; but as, perhaps, a few will read this story who do not belong to Copenhagen, it becomes necessary to give a short description of it.

The hospital is separated from the street, by a tolerably high railing, in which the thick iron rails stand so far apart that certain very thin inmates are said to have squeezed between them, and thus paid their little visits outside the premises. The part of the body most difficult to get through was the head; and here, as it often happens in the world, small heads were the most fortunate. This will be sufficient as an introduction.

One of the young volunteers, of whom one could only say in one sense that he had a great head, had the watch that evening. The rain was pouring down; but in spite of this obstacle he wanted to go out, only for a quarter of an hour. It was needless, he thought, to tell the porter of his wish, especially if he could slip through between the rails. There lay the galoshes which the Watchman had forgotten. It never occurred to him in the least that they were galoshes of Fortune. They would do him very good service in this rainy weather, and he pulled them on. Now the question was whether he could squeeze through the bars; till now he had never tried it. There he stood.

"I wish to goodness I had my head outside!" cried he. And immediately, though his head was very thick and big, it glided easily and quickly through. The galoshes must have understood it well; but now the body was to slip through also, and that could not be done.

"I'm too fat," said he. "I thought my head was the thickest. I sha'n't get through."

Now he wanted to pull his head back quickly, but he could not manage it: he could move his neck, but that was all. His first feeling was one of anger, and then his spirit sank down to zero. The galoshes of Fortune had placed him in this terrible condition, and, unfortunately, it never occurred to him to wish himself free. No: instead of wishing, he only strove, and could not stir from the spot. The rain poured down; not a creature was to be seen in the street; he could not reach the gate bell, and how was he to get loose? He foresaw that he would have to remain here until the morning, and then they would have to send for a blacksmith, to file through the iron bars. But such a business is not to be done

quickly. The entire charity school would be upon its legs; the whole sailors' quarter close by would come up and see him standing in the pillory; and a fine crowd there would be.

"Hu!" he cried, "the blood's rising to my head, and I shall go mad! Yes, I'm going mad! If I were free, most likely it would pass over."

That's what he ought to have said at first. The very moment he had uttered the thought his head was free; and now he rushed in, quite dazed with the fright the galoshes of Fortune had given him. But we must not think the whole affair was over; there was much worse to come yet.

The night passed away, and the following day too, and nobody sent for the galoshes. In the evening a display of oratory was to take place in an amateur theatre in a distant street. The house was crammed; and among the audience was the Volunteer from the hospital, who appeared to have forgotten his adventure of the previous evening. He had the galoshes on, for they had not been sent for; and as it was dirty in the streets, they might do him good service. A new piece was recited: it was called "My Aunt's Spectacles." These were spectacles which, when any one put them on in a great assembly of people, made all present look like cards, so that one could prophesy from them all that would happen in the coming year.

The idea struck him; he would have liked to possess such a pair of spectacles. If they were used rightly, they would perhaps enable the wearer to look into people's hearts; and that, he thought, would be more interesting than to see what was going to happen in the next year; for future events would be known in time, but the people's thoughts never.

"Now I'll look at the row of ladies and gentlemen on the first bench; if one could look directly into their hearts! yes, that must be a hollow, a sort of shop. How my eyes would wander about in that shop! In every lady's yonder, I should doubtless find a great milliner's warehouse; with this one here, the shop is empty, but it would do no harm to have it cleaned out. But would there really be such shops? Ah, yes!" he continued, sighing, "I know one in which all the goods are first-rate, but there's a servant in it already; that's

the only drawback in the whole shop! From one and another the word would be 'Please to step in!' O, that I might only step in, like a neat little thought, and slip through their hearts!"

That was the word of command for the galoshes. The Volunteer shriveled up, and began to take a very remarkable journey through the hearts of the first row of spectators. The first heart through which he passed was that of a lady; but he immediately fancied himself in the Orthopædic Institute, in the room where the plaster casts of deformed limbs are kept hanging against the walls; the only difference was, that these casts were formed in the Institute when the patients came in, but here in the heart they were formed and preserved after the good persons had gone away. For they were casts of female friends, whose bodily and mental faults were preserved here.

Quickly he had passed into another female heart. But this seemed to him like a great holy church; the white dove of innocence fluttered over the high altar. Gladly would he have sunk down on his knees; but he was obliged to go away into the next heart. Still, however, he heard the tones of the organ, and it seemed to him that he himself had become another and a better man. He felt himself not unworthy to enter into the next sanctuary, which showed itself in the form of a poor garret, containing a sick mother. But through the window the warm sun streamed in, and two sky-blue birds sang full of childlike joy, while the sick mother prayed for a blessing on her daughter.

Now he crept on his hands and knees through an overfilled butcher's shop. There was meat, and nothing but meat, wherever he went. It was the heart of a rich, respectable man, whose name is certainly to be found in the address book.

Now he was in the heart of this man's wife; this heart was an old dilapidated pigeon-house. The husband's portrait was used as a mere weathercock; it stood in connection with the doors, and these doors opened and shut according as the husband turned.

Then he came into a cabinet of mirrors, such as we find in the castle of Rosenburg; but the mirrors magnified in a great

degree. In the middle of the floor sat, like a Grand Lama, the insignificant *I* of the proprietor, astonished in the contemplation of his own greatness.

Then he fancied himself transported into a narrow needle-case full of pointed needles; and he thought, "This must decidedly be the heart of an old maid!" But that was not the case. It was a young officer, wearing several orders, and of whom one said, "He's a man of intellect and heart."

Quite confused was the poor Volunteer when he emerged from the heart of the last person in the first row. He could not arrange his thoughts, and fancied it must be his powerful imagination which had run away with him.

"Gracious powers!" he sighed, "I must certainly have a great tendency to go mad. It is also unconscionably hot in here; the blood is rising to my head!"

And now he remembered the great event of the last evening, how his head had been caught between the iron rails of the hospital.

"That's where I must have caught it," thought he. "I must do something at once. A Russian bath might be very good. I wish I were lying on the highest board in the bath-house."[1]

And there he lay on the highest board in the vapor-bath; but he was lying there in all his clothes, in boots and galoshes, and the hot drops from the ceiling were falling on his face.

"Hi!" he cried, and jumped down to take a plunge bath.

The attendant uttered a loud cry on seeing a person there with all his clothes on. The Volunteer had, however, enough presence of mind to whisper to him, "It's for a wager!" But the first thing he did when he got into his own room, was to put a big blister on the nape of his neck, and another on his back, that they might draw out his madness.

Next morning he had a very sore back; and that was all he had got by the galoshes of Fortune.

[1] In these Russian (vapor) baths the person extends himself on a bank or form, and as he gets accustomed to the heat, moves to another higher up towards the ceiling, where, of course, the vapor is warmest. In this manner, he ascends gradually to the highest.

V.

The Transformation of the Copying Clerk.

The Watchman, whom we surely have not yet forgotten. in the mean time thought of the galoshes, which he had found and brought to the hospital. He took them away; but as neither the Lieutenant nor any one in the street would own them, they were taken to the police office.[1]

"They look exactly like my own galoshes," said one of the copying gentlemen, as he looked at the unowned articles and put them beside his own. "More than a shoemaker's eye is required to distinguish them from one another."

"Mr. Copying Clerk," said a servant, coming in with some papers.

The Copying Clerk turned and spoke to the man: when he had done this, he turned to look at the galoshes again he was in great doubt if the right-hand or the left-hand pa belonged to him.

[1] As on the Continent in all law and police practices nothing is verbal, but any circumstance, however trifling, is reduced to writing, the labor, as well as the number of papers that thus accumulate, is enormous. In a police office, consequently, we find copying clerks among many other scribes of various denominations, of which, it seems, our hero was one.

"It must be those that are wet," he thought. Now here he thought wrong, for these were the galoshes of Fortune; but why should not the police be sometimes mistaken? He put them on, thrust his papers into his pocket, and put a few manuscripts under his arm, for they were to be read at home, and abstracts to be made from them. But now it was Sunday morning, and the weather was fine. "A walk to Fredericksburg would do me good," said he; and he went out accordingly.

There could not be a quieter, steadier person than this young man. We grant him his little walk with all our hearts; it will certainly do him good after so much sitting. At first he only walked like a vegetating creature, so the galoshes had no opportunity of displaying their magic power.

In the avenue he met an acquaintance, one of our younger poets, who told him that he was going to start, next day, on a summer trip.

"Are you going away again already?" asked the Copying Clerk. "What a happy, free man you are! You can fly wherever you like; we others have a chain to our foot."

"But it is fastened to the bread-tree!" replied the Poet. "You need not be anxious for the morrow; and when you grow old you get a pension."

"But you are better off, after all," said the Copying Clerk. "It must be a pleasure to sit and write poetry. Everybody says agreeable things to you, and then you are your own master. Ah, you should just try it, poring over the frivolous affairs in the court."

The Poet shook his head; the Copying Clerk shook his head also: each retained his own opinion; and thus they parted.

"They are a strange race, these poets!" thought the Copying Clerk. "I should like to try and enter into such a nature — to become a poet myself. I am certain I should not write such complaining verses as the rest. What a splendid spring day for a poet! The air is so remarkably clear, the clouds are so beautiful, and the green smells so sweet. For many years I have not felt as I feel at this moment."

We already notice that he has become a poet. To point

this out would, in most cases, be what the Germans call "mawkish." It is a foolish fancy to imagine a poet different from other people, for among the latter there may be natures more poetical than those of many an acknowledged poet. The difference is only that the poet has a better spiritual memory: his ears hold fast the feeling and the idea until they are embodied clearly and firmly in words; and the others cannot do that. But the transition from an every-day nature to that of a poet is always a transition, and as such it must be noticed in the Copying Clerk.

"What glorious fragrance!" he cried. "How it reminds me of the violets at Aunt Laura's! Yes, that was when I was a little boy. I have not thought of that for a long time. The good old lady! She lies yonder by the canal. She always had a twig or a couple of green shoots in the water, let the winter be as severe as it might. The violets bloomed, while I had to put warm farthings against the frozen window-panes to make peep-holes. That was a pretty view. Out in the canal the ships were frozen in, and deserted by the whole crew; a screaming crow was the only living creature left. Then when the spring breezes blew, it all became lively: the ice was sawn asunder amid shouting and cheers, the ships were tarred and rigged, and then they sailed away to strange lands. I remained here, and must always remain, and sit at the police office, and let others take passports for abroad. That's my fate. O yes!" and he sighed deeply. Suddenly he paused. "Good Heaven! what is come to me? I never thought or felt as I do now. It must be the spring air; it is just as dizzying as it is charming!" He felt in his pockets for his papers. "These will give me something else to think of," said he, and let his eyes wander over the first leaf. There he read: "'Dame Sigbirth; an original tragedy in five acts.' What is that? And it is my own hand. Have I written this tragedy? 'The Intrigue on the Promenade; or the Day of Penance. — Vaudeville.' But where did I get that from? It must have been put into my pocket. Here is a letter. Yes, it is from the manager of the theatre; the pieces are rejected, and the letter is not at all politely worded. H'm! h'm!" said the Copying Clerk, and he sat

down upon a bench : his thoughts were elastic ; his head was quite soft. Involuntarily he grasped one of the nearest flowers ; it was a common little daisy. What the botanists require several lectures to explain to us, this flower told in a minute. It told the glory of its birth ; it told of the strength of the sunlight, which spread out the delicate leaves and made them give out fragrance. Then he thought of the battles of life, which likewise awaken feelings in our breasts. Air and light are the lovers of the flower, but light is the favored one. Toward the light it turned, and only when the light vanished, the flower rolled her leaves together and slept in the embrace of the air.

"It is light that adorns me!" said the Flower.

"But the air allows you to breathe," whispered the poet's voice.

Just by him stood a boy, knocking with his stick upon the marshy ground. The drops of water spurted up among the green twigs, and the Copying Clerk thought of the millions of infusoria which were cast up on high with the drops, which was the same to them, in proportion to their size, as it would be to us if we were hurled high over the region of clouds. And the Copying Clerk thought of this, and of the great change which had taken place within him ; he smiled. "I sleep and dream! It is wonderful though, how naturally one can dream, and yet know all the time that it is a dream. I should like to be able to remember it all clearly to-morrow when I wake. I seem to myself quite unusually excited. What a clear appreciation I have of everything, and how free I feel! But I am certain that if I remember anything of it to-morrow, it will be nonsense. That has often been so with me before. It is with all the clever famous things one says and hears in dreams, as with the money of the elves under the earth ; when one receives it, it is rich and beautiful, but looked at by daylight, it is nothing but stones and dried leaves. Ah!" he sighed, quite plaintively, and gazed at the chirping birds, as they sprang merrily from bough to bough, "they are much better off than I. Flying is a noble art. Happy he who is born with wings. Yes, if I could change myself into anything, it should be into a lark."

In a moment his coat-tails and sleeves grew together and formed wings; his clothes became feathers, and his galoshes claws. He noticed it quite plainly, and laughed inwardly. "Well, now I can see that I am dreaming, but so wildly I have never dreamed before." And he flew up into the green boughs and sang; but there was no poetry in the song, for the poetic nature was gone. The galoshes, like every one who wishes to do any business thoroughly, could only do one thing at a time. He wished to be a poet, and he became one. Then he wished to be a little bird, and, in changing thus, the former peculiarity was lost.

"That is charming!" he said. "In the day-time I sit in the police office among the driest of law papers; at night, I can dream that I am flying about as a lark in the Fredericksburg Garden. One could really write quite a popular comedy upon it."

Now he flew down into the grass, turned his head in every direction, and beat with his beak upon the bending stalks of grass, which, in proportion to his size, seemed to him as long as palm branches of Northern Africa.

It was only for a moment, and then all around him became as the blackest night. It seemed to him that some immense substance was cast over him; it was a great cap, which a sailor boy threw over the bird. A hand came in and seized the Copying Clerk by the back and wings in a way that made him whistle. In his first terror he cried aloud, "The impudent rascal! I am Copying Clerk at the police office!" But that sounded to the boy only like "Piep! piep!" and he tapped the bird on the beak and wandered on with him.

In the alley, the boy met with two other boys, who belonged to the educated classes, socially speaking; but according to abilities, they ranked in the lowest class in the school. Thes bought the bird for a few Danish skillings; and so the Copying Clerk was carried back to Copenhagen.

"It's a good thing that I am dreaming," he said, "or I should become really angry. First I was a poet, and now I'm a lark! Yes, it must have been the poetic nature which transformed me into that little creature. It is a miserable state of things, especially when one falls into the hands of boys. I should like to know what the end of it will be."

The boys carried him into a very elegant room. A stout, smiling lady received them. But she was not at all gratified to see the common field bird, as she called the lark, coming in too. Only for one day she would consent to it; but they must put the bird in the empty cage which stood by the window.

"Perhaps that will please Polly," she added, and laughed at a great Parrot, swinging himself proudly in his ring in the handsome brass cage.

"It's Polly's birthday," she said simply, "so the little field bird shall congratulate him."

Polly did not answer a single word; he only swung proudly to and fro. But a pretty Canary-bird, who had been brought here last summer out of his warm, fragrant father-land, began to sing loudly.

"Screamer!" said the lady; and she threw a white handkerchief over the cage.

"Piep, piep!" sighed he; "here's a terrible snow-storm." And thus sighing, he was silent.

The Copying Clerk, or, as the lady called him, the field bird, was placed in a little cage close to the Canary, and not far from the Parrot. The only human words which Polly could say, and which often sounded very comically, were "*Come, let's be men, now!*" Everything else that he screamed out was just as unintelligible as the song of the Canary-bird, except for the Copying Clerk, who was now also a bird, and who understood his comrades very well.

"I flew under the green palm-tree and the blossoming almond-tree!" sang the Canary. "I flew with my brothers and sisters over the beautiful flowers and over the bright sea, where the plants waved in the depths. I also saw many beautiful parrots, who told the merriest stories."

"Those were wild birds," replied the Parrot. "They had no education. Let us be men now! Why don't you laugh? If the lady and all the strangers could laugh at it, so can you. It is a great fault to have no taste for what is pleasant. No, let us be men now."

"Do you remember the pretty girls who danced under the tents spread out beneath the blooming trees? Do you remember the sweet fruits, and the cooling juice in the wild plants?"

"Oh, yes!" replied the Parrot; "but here I am far better off. I have good care and genteel treatment. I know I've a good head, and I don't ask for more. Let us be men now. You are what they call a poetic soul. I have thorough knowledge and wit. You have genius, but no prudence. You mount up into those high natural notes of yours, and then you get covered up. That is never done to me; no, no, for I cost them a little more. I make an impression with my beak, and can cast wit round me. Come, let us be men!"

"O my poor blooming father-land!" sang the Canary. "I will praise thy dark-green trees and thy quiet bays, where the branches kiss the clear watery mirror; I'll sing of the joy of all my shining brothers and sisters, where the plants grow by the desert springs and the cactus grows."

"Now, pray leave off these dismal tones," cried the Parrot. "Sing something at which one can laugh! Laughter is the sign of the highest mental development. Look if a dog or a horse can laugh! No; they can cry; but laughter — that is given to men alone. Ho, ho, ho!" screamed Polly, and finished the jest with "Let us be men now."

"You little gray Northern bird," said the Canary; "so you have also become a prisoner. It is certainly cold in your woods, but still liberty is there. Fly out! they have forgotten to close your cage; the upper window is open. Fly, fly!"

Instinctively the Copying Clerk obeyed, and flew forth from his prison. At the same moment the half opened door of the next room creaked, and stealthily, with fierce sparkling eyes, the house cat crept in, and made chase upon him. The Canary fluttered in its cage, the Parrot flapped its wings, and cried "Let us be men now." The Copying Clerk felt mortally afraid, and flew through the window, away over the houses and streets; at last he was obliged to rest a little.

The house opposite had a homelike look; one of the windows stood open, and he flew in. It was his own room; he perched upon the table.

"Let us be men now," he broke out, involuntarily imitating the Parrot; and in the same moment he was restored to the form of the Copying Clerk; but he was sitting on the table.

"Heaven preserve me!" he cried. "How could I have

come here and fallen so soundly asleep? It was an unquiet dream, too, that I had. The whole thing was great nonsense."

VI.

The Best that the Galoshes brought.

On the following day, quite early in the morning, as the Clerk still lay in bed, there came a tapping at his door: it was his neighbor who lodged on the same floor, a young Theologian; and he came in.

"Lend me your galoshes," said he "It is very wet in the garden, but the sun shines gloriously, and I should like to smoke a pipe down there."

He put on the galoshes, and was soon in the garden, which contained a plum-tree and an apple-tree. Even a little garden like this is highly prized in the midst of great cities.

The Theologian wandered up and down the path; it was only six o'clock, and a post-horn sounded out in the street.

"O, travelling, travelling!" he cried out, "that's the greatest happiness in all the world. That's the highest goal of my wishes. Then this disquietude that I feel would be stilled. But it would have to be far away. I should like to see beautiful Switzerland, to travel through Italy. to"—

Yes, it was a good thing that the galoshes took effect im

mediately, for he might have gone too far even for himself, and for us others too. He was travelling; he was in the midst of Switzerland, packed tightly with eight others in the interior of a diligence. He had a headache and a weary feeling in his neck, and his feet had gone to sleep, for they were swollen by the heavy boots he had on. He was hovering in a condition between sleeping and waking. In his right-hand pocket he had his letter of credit, in his left-hand pocket his passport, and a few louis d'or were sewn into a little bag he wore on his breast. Whenever he dozed off, he dreamed he had lost one or other of these possessions; and then he would start up in a feverish way, and the first movement his hand made was to describe a triangle from left to right, and toward his breast, to feel whether he still possessed them or not. Umbrellas, hats, and walking sticks swung in the net over him, and almost took away the prospect, which was impressive enough: he glanced out at it, and his heart sang what one poet at least, whom we know, has sung in Switzerland, but has not yet printed: —

"'T'is a prospect as fine as heart can desire,
Before me Mont Blanc the rough:
'T'is pleasant to tarry here and admire,
If only you've money enough."

Great, grave, and dark was all nature around him. The pine woods looked like little mosses upon the high rocks, whose summits were lost in cloudy mists; and then it began to snow, and the wind blew cold.

"Hu!" he sighed; "if we were only on the other side of the Alps, then it would be summer, and I should have got money on my letter of credit; my anxiety about this prevents me from enjoying Switzerland. O, if I were only at the other side!"

And then he was on the other side, in the midst of Italy, between Florence and Rome. The lake Thrasymene lay spread out in the evening light, like flaming gold among the dark-blue hills. Here, where Hannibal beat Flaminius, the grape-vines held each other by their green fingers; pretty, half-naked children were keeping a herd of coal-black pigs under a clump of fragrant laurels by the way-side. If we

could reproduce this scene accurately, all would cry, "Glorious Italy!" But neither the Theologian nor any of his travelling companions in the carriage of the vetturino thought this.

Poisonous flies and gnats flew into the carriage by thousands. In vain they beat the air frantically with a myrtle branch — the flies stung them, nevertheless. There was not one person in the carriage whose face was not swollen and covered with stings. The poor horses looked miserable, the flies tormented them wofully, and it only mended the matter for a moment when the coachman dismounted and scraped them clean of the insects that sat upon them in great swarms. Now the sun sank down; at once an icy coldness pervaded all nature; it was like the cold air of a funeral vault after the sultry summer day; and all around the hills and clouds put on that remarkable green tone which we notice on some old pictures, and consider unnatural unless we have ourselves witnessed a similar play of color. It was a glorious spectacle; but the stomachs of all were empty and their bodies exhausted, and every wish of the heart turned toward a resting-place for the night; but how could that be won? To descry this resting-place all eyes were turned more eagerly to the road than toward the beauties of nature.

The way now led through an olive wood; he could have fancied himself passing between knotty willow trunks at home. Here, by the solitary inn, a dozen crippled beggars had taken up their positions; the quickest among them looked, to quote an expression of Marryat's, like the eldest son of Famine, who had just come of age. The others were either blind or had withered legs so that they crept about on their hands, or they had withered arms with fingerless hands. This was misery in rags indeed. "*Eccellenza miserabili!*" they sighed, and stretched forth their diseased limbs. The hostess herself, in untidy hair, and dressed in a dirty blouse, received her guests. The doors were tied up with string; the floor of the room was of brick, and half of it was grubbed up; bats flew about under the roof, and the smell within —

"Yes, lay the table down in the stable," said one of the travellers. "There, at least, one knows what one is breathing."

The windows were opened, so that a little fresh air might find its way in; but quicker than the air came the withered arms and the continual whining, "*Miserabili Eccellenza!*" On the walls were many inscriptions; half of them were spiteful toward "*La bella Italia.*"

The supper was served. It consisted of a watery soup, seasoned with pepper and rancid oil. This last dainty played a chief part in the salad; musty eggs and roasted cocks'-combs were the best dishes. Even the wine had a strange taste — it was a dreadful mixture.

At night the boxes were placed against the doors. One of the travellers kept watch while the rest slept. The Theologian was the sentry. O, how close it was in there! The heat oppressed him, the gnats buzzed and stung, and the *miserabili* outside moaned in their dreams.

"Yes, travelling would be all very well," said the Theologian, "if one had no body. If the body could rest, and the mind fly! Wherever I go, I find a want that oppresses my heart; it is something better than the present moment that I desire. Yes, something better — the best; but what is that, and where is it? In my own heart I know very well what I want; I want to attain to a happy goal, the happiest of all."

And so soon as the word was spoken he found himself at home. The long white curtains hung down from the windows, and in the middle of the room stood a black coffin: in this he was lying in the quiet sleep of death; his wish was fulfilled — his body was at rest, and his spirit roaming. "Esteem no man happy who is not yet in his grave," were the words of Solon; here their force was proved anew.

Every corpse is a sphinx of immortality: the sphinx here also, in the black sarcophagus, answered, what the living man had laid down two days before: —

"Thou strong, stern Death! Thy silence waketh fear;
Thou leavest mould'ring grave-stones for thy traces.
Shall not the soul see Jacob's ladder here?
No resurrection type but church-yard grasses?
The deepest woes escape the world's dull eye:
Thou that alone on duty's path hast sped,
Heavier those duties on thy heart would lie
Than lies the earth now on thy coffined head."

Two forms were moving to and fro in the room. We know them both. They were the Fairy of Care and the Ambassadress of Fortune. They bent down over the dead man.

"Do you see?" said Care. "What happiness have your galoshes brought to men?"

"They have, at least, brought a permanent benefit to him who slumbers here," replied Fortune.

"O no!" said Care. "He went away of himself, he was not summoned. His spirit was not strong enough to lift the treasures which he had been destined to lift. I will do him a favor."

And she drew the galoshes from his feet; then the sleep of death was ended, and the awakened man raised himself up. Care vanished, and with her the galoshes disappeared too: doubtless she looked upon them as her property.

TWELVE BY THE MAIL.

IT was bitterly cold; the sky gleamed with stars, and not a breeze was stirring.

Bump! an old pot was thrown at the neighbors' house doors. Bang! bang! went the gun; for they were welcoming the New Year. It was New Year's Eve! The church clock was striking twelve!

Tan-ta-ra-ra! the mail came lumbering up. The great carriage stopped at the gate of the town. There were twelve persons in it; all the places were taken.

"Hurrah! hurrah!" sang the people in the houses of the town, for the New Year was being welcomed, and as the clock struck they stood up with filled glass in hand, to drink success to the new-comer.

"Happy New Year!" was the cry. "A pretty wife, plenty of money, and no sorrow or care!"

This wish was passed round, and then glasses were clashed together till they rang again, and in front of the town gate the post-carriage stopped with the strange guests, the twelve travellers.

And who were these strangers? Each of them had his passport and his luggage with him: they even brought presents for me and for you and for all the people of the little town. Who are they? What did they want? and what did they bring with them?

"Good morning!" they cried to the Sentry at the town gate.

"Good morning!" replied the Sentry, for the clock struck twelve.

"Your name and profession?" the Sentry inquired of the one who alighted first from the carriage.

"See yourself, in the passport," replied the man. "I am myself!" And a capital fellow he looked, arrayed in a bear-skin and fur boots. "I am the man on whom many persons fix their hopes. Come to me to-morrow, and I'll give you a New Year's present. I throw pence and dollars among the

people ; I even give balls, thirty-one balls ; but I cannot devote more than thirty-one nights to this. My ships are frozen in, but in my office it is warm and comfortable. I'm a merchant. My name is JANUARY, and I only carry accounts with me."

Now the second alighted. He was a merry companion ; he was a theatre director, manager of the masque balls, and all the amusements one can imagine. His luggage consisted of a great tub.

"We'll dance the cat out of the tub at carnival-time," said he. "I'll prepare a merry tune for you and for myself too. I have not a very long time to live — the shortest, in fact, of my whole family, for I only become twenty-eight days old Sometimes they pop me in an extra day, but I trouble myself very little about that. Hurrah !"

"You must not shout so," said the Sentry.

"Certainly, I may shout !" retorted the man. "I'm Prince Carnival, travelling under the name of FEBRUARY !"

The third now got out. He looked like Fasting itself, but carried his nose very high, for he was related to the "Forty Knights," and was a weather prophet. But that's not a profitable office, and that's why he praised fasting. In his buttonhole he had a little bunch of violets, but they were very small.

"MARCH ! MARCH !" the fourth called after him, and slapped him on the shoulder. "Do you smell nothing ? Go quickly into the guard-room ; there they're drinking punch, your favorite drink ! I can smell it already out here. Forward, Master March !"

But it was not true ; the speaker only wanted to let him feel the influence of his own name, and make an APRIL fool of him ; for with that the fourth began his career in the town. He looked very jovial, did little work, but had the more holidays.

"If it were only a little more steady in the world !" said he ; "but sometimes one is in a good humor, sometimes in a bad one, according to circumstances ; now rain, now sunshine. I am a kind of house and office-letting agent, also a manager of funerals. I can laugh or cry, according to circumstances Here in this box I have my summer wardrobe, but it would

be very foolish to put it on. Here I am now! On Sundays I go out walking in shoes and silk stockings, and with a muff!"

After him, a lady came out of the carriage. She called herself Miss MAY. She wore a summer costume and overshoes, a light green dress, and anemones in her hair, and she was so scented with wild thyme that the Sentry had to sneeze.

"God bless you!" she said, and that was her salutation.

How pretty she was! and she was a singer — not a theatre nor a ballad singer, but a singer of the woods, for she roamed through the gay green forest, and sang there for her own amusement.

"Now comes the young dame!" said those in the carriage.

And the young dame stepped out, delicate, proud, and pretty. It was easy to see that she was Mistress JUNE, accustomed to be served by drowsy marmots. She gave a great feast on the longest day of the year, that the guests might have time to partake of the many dishes at her table. She, indeed, kept her own carriage; but still she travelled in the mail with the rest, because she wanted to show that she was not high-minded. But she was not without protection; her elder brother JULY was with her.

He was a plump young fellow, clad in summer garments, and with a Panama hat. He had but little baggage with him, because it was cumbersome in the great heat; therefore he had only provided himself with swimming trousers, and those are not much.

Then came the mother herself, Madam AUGUST, wholesale dealer in fruit, proprietress of a large number of fish-ponds, and land cultivator, in a great crinoline; she was fat and hot, could use her hands well, and would herself carry out beer to the workmen in the fields.

"'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread'" said she: "that is written in the *Book*. Afterward come the excursions, dance, and playing in the greenwood, and the harvest feasts!"

She was a thorough housewife.

After her a man came out of the coach, a painter, Mr. Master-colorer SEPTEMBER. The forest had to receive him; the leaves were to change their colors, but how beautifully! when

he wished it; soon the wood gleamed with red, yellow, and brown. The master whistled like the black magpie, was a quick workman, and wound the brown green hop-plants round his beer-jug. That was an ornament for the jug, and he had a good idea of ornament. There he stood with his color-pot, and that was his whole luggage.

A landed proprietor followed him, one who cared for the ploughing and preparing of the land, and also for field sports. Squire OCTOBER brought his dog and his gun with him, and nuts in his game-bag. "Crack! crack!" He had much baggage, even an English plough; and he spoke of farming, but one could scarcely hear what he said, for the coughing and gasping of his neighbor.

It was NOVEMBER who coughed so violently as he got out. He was very much plagued by a cold; he was continually having recourse to his pocket-handkerchief, and yet, he said, he was obliged to accompany the servant girls, and initiate them into their new winter service. He said he should get rid of his cold when he went out wood-cutting, and had to saw and split wood, for he was sawyer-master to the firewood guild. He spent his evenings cutting the wooden soles for skates, for he knew, he said, that in a few weeks there would be occasion to use these amusing shoes.

At length appeared the last passenger, old Mother DECEMBER, with her fire-stool. The old lady was cold, but her eyes glistened like two bright stars. She carried on her arm a flower-pot, in which a little fir-tree was growing.

"This tree I will guard and cherish, that it may grow large by Christmas Eve, and may reach from the ground to the ceiling, and may rear itself upward with flaming candles, golden apples, and little carved figures. The fire-stool warms like a stove. I bring the story-book out of my pocket and read aloud, so that all the children in the room become quite quiet; but the little figures on the trees become lively, and the little waxen angel on the top spreads out his wings of gold leaf, flies down from his green perch, and kisses great and small in the room, yes, even the poor children who stand out in the passage and in the street, singing the carol about the Star of Bethlehem."

"Well, now the coach may drive away!" said the Sentry; "we have the whole twelve. Let the chaise drive up."

"First let all the twelve come in to me," said the Captain on duty, "one after the other. The passports I will keep here. Each of them is available for a month; when that has passed, I shall write their behavior on each passport. Mr. January, have the goodness to come here."

And Mr. January stepped forward.

When a year is passed I think I shall be able to tell you what the twelve have brought to me, and to you, and to all of us. Now I do not know it, and they don't know it themselves, probably, for we live in strange times.

THE GARDEN OF PARADISE.

ONCE there was a King's son. No one had so many and so beautiful books as he; everything that had happened in this world he could read there, and could see pictures of it all in lovely copper-plates. Of every people, and of every land he could get intelligence; but there was not a word to tell where the Garden of Paradise could be found, and it was just that of which he thought most.

His grandmother had told him, when he was quite little, but was to begin to go to school, that every flower in this Paradise Garden was a delicate cake, and the pistils contained the choicest wine; on one of the flowers history was written, and on another geography or tables, so that one had only to eat cake, and one knew a lesson; and the more one ate, the more history, geography, or tables did one learn.

At that time he believed this. But when he became a bigger boy, and learned more and became wiser, he understood well that the splendor in the Garden of Paradise must be of quite a different kind.

"O, why did Eve pluck from the Tree of Knowledge?

Why did Adam eat the forbidden fruit? If I had been he, it would never have happened — then sin would never have come into the world."

That he said then, and he still said it when he was seventeen years old. The Garden of Paradise filled all his thoughts.

One day he walked in the wood. He was walking quite alone, for that was his greatest pleasure. The evening came, and the clouds gathered together; rain streamed down as if the sky were one single river from which the water was pouring; it was dark as it usually is at night in the deepest well. Often he slipped on the smooth grass, often he fell over the smooth stones which peered up out of the wet, rocky ground. Everything was soaked with water, and there was not a dry thread on the poor Prince. He was obliged to climb over great blocks of stone, where the water spurted from the thick moss. He was nearly fainting. Then he heard a strange rushing, and saw before him a great illuminated cave. In the midst of it burned a fire, so large that a stag might have been roasted at it. And this was in fact being done. A glorious deer had been stuck, horns and all, upon a spit, and was turning slowly between two felled pine trunks. An elderly woman, large and strongly built, looking like a disguised man, sat by the fire, into which she threw one piece of wood after another.

"Come nearer!" said she. "Sit down by the fire and dry your clothes."

"There's a great draught here!" said the Prince; and he sat down on the ground.

"That will be worse when my sons come home," replied the Woman. "You are here in the Cavern of the Winds, and my sons are the four Winds of the world; can you understand that?"

"Where are your sons?" asked the Prince.

"It is difficult to answer when stupid questions are asked," said the Woman. "My sons do business on their own account. They play at shuttlecock with the clouds up yonder in the King's hall."

And she pointed upwards.

"O, indeed!" said the Prince. "But you speak rather

gruffly, by the way, and are not so mild as the women I generally see about me."

"Yes, they have most likely nothing else to do! I must be hard, if I want to keep my sons in order; but I can do it, though they are obstinate fellows. Do you see the four sacks hanging there by the wall? They are just as frightened of those as you used to be of the rod stuck behind the glass. I can bend the lads together, I tell you, and then I pop them into the bag; we don't make any ceremony. There they sit, and may not wander about again until I think fit to allow them. But here comes one of them."

It was the North Wind, who rushed in with piercing cold; great hailstones skipped about on the floor, and snow-flakes fluttered about. He was dressed in a jacket and trousers of bear-skin; a cap of seal-skin was drawn down over his ears; long icicles hung on his beard, and one hailstone after another rolled from the collar of his jacket.

"Do not go so near the fire directly," said the Prince; "you might get your hands and face frost-bitten."

"Frost-bitten?" repeated the North Wind, and he laughed aloud. "Cold is exactly what rejoices me most! But what kind of little tailor art thou? How did you find your way into the Cavern of the Winds?"

"He is my guest," interposed the old Woman, "and if you're not satisfied with this explanation you may go into the sack; do you understand me?"

You see that was the right way; and now the North Wind told whence he came, and where he had been for almost a month.

"I came from the Polar Sea," said he; "I have been in the bear's icy land with the walrus hunters. I sat and slept on the helm when they went away from the North Cape, and when I awoke, now and then, the storm-bird flew round my legs. That's a comical bird! He gives a sharp clap with his wings, and then holds them quite still and shoots along in full career."

"Don't be too long-winded," said the Mother of the Winds. "And so you came to the Bear's Island?"

"It is very beautiful there. There's a floor for dancing

on as flat as a plate. Half-thawed snow, with a little moss, sharp stones, and skeletons of walruses and polar bears lay around, and likewise gigantic arms and legs of a rusty green color. One would have thought the sun had never shone there. I blew a little upon the mist, so that one could see the hut; it was a house built of wreck-wood and covered with walrus-skins — the fleshy side turned outwards. It was full of green and red, and on the roof sat a live polar bear who was growling. I went to the shore to look after birds'-nests, and saw the unfledged nestlings screaming and opening their beaks; then I blew down into their thousand throats, and taught them to shut their mouths. Farther on the huge walruses were splashing like great maggots with pigs' heads, and teeth an ell long!"

"You tell your story well, my son," said the old Lady. "My mouth waters when I hear you!"

"Then the hunting began! The harpoon was hurled into the walrus's breast, so that a smoking stream of blood spurted like a fountain over the ice. When I thought of my sport, I blew, and let my sailing ships, the big icebergs, crush the boats between them. O, how the people whistled and how they cried! but I whistled louder than they. They were obliged to throw the dead walruses and their chests and tackle out upon the ice. I shook the snow-flakes over them, and let them drive south in their crushed boats with their booty to taste salt water. They'll never come to Bear's Island again!"

"Then you have done a wicked thing!" said the Mother of the Winds.

"What good I have done others may tell," replied he. "But here comes a brother from the west. I like him best of all: he tastes of the sea and brings a delicious coolness with him."

"Is that little Zephyr?" asked the Prince.

"Yes, certainly, that is Zephyr," replied the old Woman. "But he is not little. Years ago he was a pretty boy, but that's past now."

He looked like a wild man, but he had a broad-brimmed hat on, to save his face. In his hand he held a club of mahogany, hewn in the American mahogany forests. It was no trifle.

"Where do you come from?" said his mother.

"Out of the forest wilderness," said he, "where the water-snake lies in the wet grass, and people don't seem to be wanted."

"What were you doing there?"

"I looked into the deepest river, and watched how it rushed down from the rocks, and turned to spray, and shot up toward the clouds to carry the rainbow. I saw the wild buffalo swimming in the stream, but the stream carried him away. He drifted with the flock of wild ducks that flew up where the water fell down in a cataract. The buffalo had to go down it! That pleased me, and I blew a storm, so that ancient trees were split up into splinters!"

"And have you done nothing else?" asked the old Dame.

"I have thrown somersaults in the Savannahs: I have stroked the wild horses and shaken the cocoa-nut palms. Yes, yes, I have stories to tell! But one must not tell all one knows. You know that, old Lady."

And he kissed his mother so roughly that she almost tumbled over. He was a terribly wild young fellow!

Now came the South Wind, with a turban on and a flying Bedouin's cloak.

"It's terribly cold out here!" cried he, and threw some more wood on the fire. "One can feel that the North Wind came first."

"It's so hot that one could roast a Polar bear here," said the North Wind.

"You're a Polar bear yourself," retorted the South Wind.

"Do you want to be put in the sack?" asked the old Dame. "Sit upon the stone yonder and tell me where you have been."

"In Africa, mother," he answered. "I was out hunting the lion with the Hottentots in the land of the Kaffirs. Grass grows there in the plains, green as an olive. There the ostrich ran races with me, but I am swifter than he. I came into the desert where the yellow sand lies: it looks there like the bottom of the sea. I met a caravan. The people were killing their last camel to get water to drink, but it was very little they got. The sun burned above and the sand below.

The outspread deserts had no bounds. Then I rolled in the fine loose sand, and whirled it up in great pillars. That was a dance! You should have seen how the dromedary stood there terrified, and the merchant drew the caftan over his head. He threw himself down before me, as before Allah, his God. Now they are buried — a pyramid of sand covers them all. When I some day blow that away, the sun will bleach the white bones; then travellers may see that men have been there before them. Otherwise, one would not believe that, in the desert!"

"So you have done nothing but evil!" exclaimed the Mother. "March into the sack!"

And before he was aware, she had seized the South Wind round the body, and popped him into the bag. He rolled about on the floor; but she sat down on the sack, and then he had to keep quiet.

"Those are lively boys of yours," said the Prince.

"Yes," she replied, "and I know how to punish them! Here comes the fourth!"

That was the East Wind, who came dressed like a Chinaman.

"O! do you come from that region?" said his mother. "I thought you had been in the Garden of Paradise."

"I don't fly there till to-morrow," said the East Wind. "It will be a hundred years to-morrow since I was there. I come from China now, where I danced around the porcelain tower till all the bells jingled again! In the streets the officials were being thrashed: the bamboos were broken upon their shoulders, yet they were high people, from the first to the ninth grade. They cried, 'Many thanks, my paternal benefactor!' but it did not come from their hearts. And I rang the bells and sang 'Tsing, tsang, tsu!'"

"You are foolish," said the old Dame. "It is a good thing that you are going into the Garden of Paradise to-morrow: that always helps on your education. Drink bravely out of the spring of wisdom, and bring home a little bottleful for me."

"That I will do," said the East Wind. "But why have you clapped my brother South in the bag? Out with him! He

shall tell me about the Phœnix bird, for about that bird the Princess in the Garden of Paradise always wants to hear, when I pay my visit every hundredth year. Open the sack, then you shall be my sweetest of mothers, and I will give you two pocketsful of tea, green and fresh as I plucked it at the place where it grew!"

"Well, for the sake of the tea, and because you are my darling boy, I will open the sack."

She did so, and the South Wind crept out; but he looked quite downcast, because the strange Prince had seen his disgrace.

"There you have a palm-leaf for the Princess," said the South Wind. "This palm-leaf was given me by the Phœnix bird, the only one who is in the world. With his beak he has scratched upon it a description of all the hundred years he has lived. Now she may read herself how the Phœnix bird set fire to her nest, and sat upon it, and was burned to death like a Hindoo's widow. How the dry branches crackled! What a smoke and a steam there was! At last everything burst into flame, and the old Phœnix turned to ashes, but her egg lay red-hot in the fire; it burst with a great bang, and the young one flew out. Now this young one is ruler over all the birds, and the only Phœnix in the world. It has bitten a hole in the palm-leaf I have given you. That is a greeting to the Princess."

"Let us have something to eat," said the Mother of the Winds.

And now they all sat down to eat of the roasted deer. The Prince sat beside the East Wind, and they soon became good friends.

"Just tell me," said the Prince, "what Princess is that about whom there is so much talk here? and where does the Garden of Paradise lie?"

"Ho, ho!" said the East Wind, "do you want to go there? Well, then, fly to-morrow with me! But I must tell you, however, that no man has been there since the time of Adam and Eve. You have read of them in your Bible histories?"

"Yes," said the Prince.

"When they were driven away, the Garden of Paradise

sank into the earth; but it kept its warm sunshine, its mild air, and all its splendor. The Queen of the Fairies lives there, and there lies the Island of Happiness, where death never comes, and where it is beautiful. Sit upon my back to-morrow, and I will take you with me; I think it can very well be done. But now leave off talking, for I want to sleep."

And then they all went to rest.

In the early morning the Prince awoke, and was not a little astonished to find himself high above the clouds. He was sitting on the back of the East Wind, who was faithfully holding him; they were so high in the air, that the woods and fields, rivers and lakes, looked as if they were painted on a map below them.

"Good morning!" said the East Wind. "You might very well sleep a little longer, for there is not much to be seen on the flat country under us, unless you care to count the churches. They stand like dots of chalk on the green carpet."

What he called green carpet was field and meadow.

"It was rude of me not to say good-by to your mother and your brothers," said the Prince.

"When one is asleep, one must be excused," replied the East Wind.

And then they flew on faster than ever. One could hear them in the tops of the trees, for when they passed over them the leaves and twigs rustled; one could hear them on the sea and on the lakes, for when they flew by the water rose higher, and the great ships bowed themselves toward the water like swimming swans.

Toward evening, when it became dark, the great towns looked charming, for lights were burning below, here and there; it was just as when one has lighted a piece of paper, and sees all the little sparks which vanish one after another. And the Prince clapped his hands; but the East Wind begged him to let that be, and rather to hold fast, otherwise he might easily fall down and get caught on a church spire.

The eagle in the dark woods flew lightly, but the East Wind flew more lightly still. The Cossack on his little horse skimmed swiftly over the surface of the earth, but the Prince skimmed more swiftly still.

"Now you can see the Himalayas," said the East Wind. "That is the highest mountain range in Asia. Now we shall soon get to the Garden of Paradise."

Then they turned more to the south, and soon the air was fragrant with flowers and spices; figs and pomegranates grew wild, and the wild vine bore clusters of red and purple grapes. Here both alighted, and stretched themselves on the soft grass, where the flowers nodded to the wind, as though they would have said, "Welcome!"

"Are we now in the Garden of Paradise?" asked the Prince.

"Not at all," replied the East Wind. "But we shall soon get there. Do you see the rocky wall yonder, and the great cave, where the vines cluster like a broad green curtain? Through that we shall pass. Wrap yourself in your cloak. Here the sun scorches you, but a step farther it will be icy cold. The bird which hovers past the cave has one wing in the region of summer, and the other in the wintry cold."

"So this is the way to the Garden of Paradise?" observed the Prince.

They went into the cave. Ugh! but it was icy cold there, but this did not last long. The East Wind spread out his wings, and they gleamed like the brightest fire. What a cave was that! Great blocks of stone, from which the water dripped down, hung over them in the strangest shapes; sometimes it was so narrow that they had to creep on their hands and knees, sometimes as lofty and broad as in the open air. The place looked like a number of mortuary chapels, with dumb organ pipes, the organs themselves being petrified.

"We are going through the way of death to the Garden of Paradise, are we not?" inquired the Prince.

The East Wind answered not a syllable, but he pointed forward to where a lovely blue light gleamed upon them. The stone blocks over their heads became more and more like a mist, and at last looked like a white cloud in the moonlight. Now they were in a deliciously mild air, fresh as on the hills, fragrant as among the roses of the valley. There ran a river clear as the air itself, and the fishes were like silver and gold: purple eels, flashing out blue sparks at every moment, played

in the water below; and the broad water-plant leaves shone in the colors of the rainbow; the flower itself was an orange-colored burning flame, to which the water gave nourishment, as the oil to the burning lamp; a bridge of marble, strong, indeed, but so lightly built that it looked as if made of lace and glass beads, led them across the water to the Island of Happiness, where the Garden of Paradise bloomed.

Were they palm-trees that grew here, or gigantic water-plants? Such verdant, mighty trees the Prince had never beheld; the most wonderful climbing plants hung there in long festoons, as one only sees them illuminated in gold and colors on the margins of gold missal-books, or twined among the initial letters. Here were the strangest groupings of birds, flowers, and twining lines. Close by, in the grass, stood a flock of peacocks, with their shining, starry trains outspread.

Yes, it was really so! But when the Prince touched these, he found they were not birds, but plants; they were great burdocks, which shone like the peacock's gorgeous train. The lion and the tiger sprang to and fro like agile cats among the green bushes, which were fragrant as the blossom of the olive-tree; and the lion and the tiger were tame. The wild wood-pigeon shone like the most beautiful pearl, and beat her wings against the lion's mane; and the antelope, usually so timid, stood by, nodding its head, as if it wished to play too.

Now came the Fairy of Paradise. Her garb shone like the sun, and her countenance was cheerful like that of a happy mother when she is well pleased with her child. She was young and beautiful, and was followed by a number of pretty maidens, each with a gleaming star in her hair. The East Wind gave her the written leaf from the Phœnix bird, and her eyes shone with pleasure.

She took the Prince by the hand and led him into her palace, where the walls had the color of a splendid tulip-leaf when it is held up in the sunlight. The ceiling was a great sparkling flower, and the more one looked up at it, the deeper did its cup appear. The Prince stepped to the window and looked through one of the panes. Here he saw the Tree of Knowledge, with the serpent, and Adam and Eve were standing close by.

"Were they not driven out?" he asked.

And the Fairy smiled, and explained to him that Time had burned in the picture upon that pane, but not as people are accustomed to see pictures. No, there was life in it; the leaves of the trees moved, men came and went as in a dissolving view. And he looked through another pane, and there was Jacob's dream, with the ladder reaching up into heaven, and the angels with great wings were ascending and descending. Yes, everything that had happened in the world lived and moved in the glass panes; such cunning pictures only Time could burn in.

The Fairy smiled, and led him into a great lofty hall, whose walls appeared transparent. Here were portraits, and each face looked fairer than the last. There were to be seen millions of happy ones who smiled and sang, so that it flowed together into a melody; the uppermost were so small that they looked like the smallest rose-bud when it is drawn as a point upon paper. And in the midst of the hall stood a great tree with rich, pendent boughs: golden apples, great and small, hung like oranges among the leaves. That was the Tree of Knowledge, of whose fruit Adam and Eve had eaten. From each leaf fell a shining red dew-drop; it was as though the tree wept tears of blood.

"Let us now get into the boat," said the Fairy; "then we will enjoy some refreshment on the heaving waters. The boat rocks, yet does not quit its station; but all the lands of the earth will glide past in our sight."

And it was wonderful to behold how the whole coast moved. There came the lofty snow-covered Alps, with clouds and black pine-trees; the horn sounded with its melancholy note, and the shepherd trolled his merry song in the valley. Then the banana-trees bent their long, hanging branches over the boat; coal-black swans swam on the water, and the strangest animals and flowers showed themselves upon the shore. That was New Holland, the fifth great division of the world, which glided past with a background of blue hills. They heard the song of the priests, and saw the savages dancing to the sound of drums and of bone trumpets. Egypt's pyramids, towering aloft to the clouds; overturned pillars and

sphinxes, half buried in the sand, — sailed past likewise. The northern lights shone over the extinct volcanoes of the Pole — it was a fire-work that no one could imitate. The Prince was quite happy, and he saw a hundred times more than we can relate here.

"And can I always stay here?" asked he.

"That depends upon yourself," answered the Fairy. "If you do not, like Adam, yield to the temptation to do what is forbidden, you may always remain here."

"I shall not touch the apples on the Tree of Knowledge!" said the Prince. "Here are thousands of fruits just as beautiful as those."

"Search your own heart, and if you are not strong enough, go away with the East Wind that brought you hither. He is going to fly back, and will not show himself here again for a hundred years: the time will pass for you in this place as if it were a hundred hours, but it is a long time for the temptation of sin. Every evening, when I leave you, I shall have to call to you, 'Come with me!' and I shall have to beckon to you with my hand; but stay where you are: do not go with me, or your longing will become greater with every step. You will then come into the hall where the Tree of Knowledge grows; I sleep under its fragrant, pendent boughs; you will bend over me, and I must smile; but if you press a kiss upon my mouth, the Paradise will sink deep into the earth and be lost to you. The keen wind of the desert will rush around you, the cold rain drop upon your head, and sorrow and woe will be your portion."

"I shall stay here!" said the Prince.

And the East Wind kissed him on the forehead, and said, —

"Be strong, and we shall meet here again in a hundred years. Farewell! farewell!"

And the East Wind spread out his broad wings, and they flashed like sheet lightning in harvest-time, or like the northern light in the cold winter.

"Farewell! farewell!" sounded from among the flowers and the trees. Storks and pelicans flew away in rows like fluttering ribbons, and bore him company to the boundary of the garden.

"Now we will begin our dances!" cried the Fairy. "At the end, when I dance with you, when the sun goes down, you will see me beckon to you; you will hear me call to you, 'Come with me;' but do not obey. For a hundred years I must repeat this every evening; every time, when the trial is past, you will gain more strength; at last you will not think of it at all. This evening is the first time. Now I have warned you."

And the Fairy led him into a great hall of white transparent lilies: the yellow stamens in each flower formed a little golden harp, which sounded like stringed instrument and flute. The most beautiful maidens, floating and slender, clad in gauzy mist, glided by in the dance, and sang of the happiness of living, and declared that they would never die, and that the Garden of Paradise would bloom forever.

And the sun went down. The whole sky shone like gold, which gave to the lilies the hue of the most glorious roses; and the Prince drank of the foaming wine which the maidens poured out for him, and felt a happiness he had never before known. He saw how the background of the hall opened, and the Tree of Knowledge stood in a glory which blinded his eyes; the singing there was soft and lovely as the voice of his dear mother, and it was as though she sang, "My child! my beloved child!"

Then the Fairy beckoned to him, and called out persuasively, —

"Come with me! come with me!"

And he rushed toward her, forgetting his promise, — forgetting it the very first evening; and still she beckoned and smiled. The fragrance, the delicious fragrance around became stronger, the harps sounded far more lovely, and it seemed as though the millions of smiling heads in the hall, where the Tree grew, nodded and sang, "One must know everything — man is the lord of the earth." And they were no longer drops of blood that the Tree of Knowledge wept; they were red, shining stars which he seemed to see.

"Come! come!" the quivering voice still cried, and at every step the Prince's cheeks burned more hotly and his blood flowed more rapidly.

"I must!" said he. "It is no sin; it cannot be one. Why not follow beauty and joy? I only want to see her asleep; there will be nothing lost if I only refrain from kissing her: and I will not kiss her; I am strong and have a resolute will!"

And the Fairy threw off her shining cloak and bent back the branches, and in another moment she was hidden among them.

"I have not yet sinned," said the Prince, "and I will not."

And he pushed the boughs aside. There she slept already, beautiful as only a fairy in the Garden of Paradise can be. She smiled in her dreams, and he bent over her, and saw tears quivering beneath her eyelids!

"Do you weep for me?" he whispered. "Weep not, thou glorious woman! Now only I understand the bliss of Paradise! It streams through my blood, through my thoughts; the power of the angel and of increasing life I feel in my mortal body! Let what will happen to me now; one moment like this is wealth enough!"

And he kissed the tears from her eyes — his mouth touched hers.

Then there resounded a clap of thunder so loud and dreadful that no one had ever heard the like, and everything fell down; and the beautiful Fairy and the charming Paradise sank down, deeper and deeper. The Prince saw it vanish into the black night; like a little bright star it gleamed out of the far distance. A deadly chill ran through his frame, and he closed his eyes, and lay for a long time as one dead.

The cold rain fell upon his face, the keen wind roared round his head, and then his senses returned to him.

"What have I done?" he sighed. "I have sinned like Adam — sinned so that Paradise has sunk deep down!"

And he opened his eyes, and the star in the distance — the star that gleamed like the Paradise that had sunk down, was the morning-star in the sky.

He stood up, and found himself in the great forest, close by the Cave of the Winds, and the Mother of the Winds sat by his side: she looked angry, and raised her arm in the air.

"The very first evening!" said she. "I thought it would be so! Yes, if you were my son, you would have to go into the sack!"

"Yes, he shall go in there!" said Death. He was a strong old man, with a scythe in his hand, and with great black wings. "Yes, he shall be laid in his coffin, but not yet: I only register him, and let him wander awhile in the world to expiate his sins and to grow better. But one day I shall come. When he least expects it, I shall clap him in the black coffin, put him on my head, and fly up toward the star. There, too, blooms the garden of Paradise; and if he is good and pious he will go in there; but if his thoughts are evil, and his heart still full of sin, he will sink with his coffin deeper than Paradise has sunk, and only every thousandth year I shall fetch him, that he may sink deeper, or that he may attain to the star — the shining star up yonder!"

THE CONSTANT TIN SOLDIER.

THERE were once five-and-twenty tin soldiers; they were all brothers, for they had all been born of one old tin spoon. They shouldered their muskets, and looked straight before them; their uniform was red and blue, and very splendid. The first thing they had heard in the world, when the lid was taken off their box, had been the words "Tin soldiers!" These words were uttered by a little boy, clapping his hands; the soldiers had been given to him, for it was his birthday; and now he put them upon the table. Each soldier was exactly like the rest; but one of them had been cast last of all, and there had not been enough tin to finish him; but he stood as firmly upon his one leg as the others on their two; and it was just this soldier who became remarkable.

On the table on which they had been placed stood many other playthings, but the toy that attracted most attention was a neat castle of card-board. Through the little windows one could see straight into the hall. Before the castle some little trees were placed round a little looking-glass, which was

to represent a clear lake. Waxen swans swam on this lake, and were mirrored in it. This was all very pretty; but the prettiest of all was a little lady, who stood at the open door of the castle; she was also cut out in paper, but she had a dress of the clearest gauze, and a little narrow blue ribbon over her shoulders, that looked like a scarf; and in the middle of this ribbon was a shining tinsel rose, as big as her whole face. The little Lady stretched out both her arms, for she was a dancer, and then she lifted one leg so high that the Tin Soldier could not see it at all, and thought that, like himself, she had but one leg.

"That would be the wife for me," thought he; "but she is very grand. She lives in a castle, and I have only a box, and there are five-and-twenty of us in that. It is no place for her. But I must try to make acquaintance with her."

And then he lay down at full length behind a snuff-box which was on the table; there he could easily watch the little dainty lady, who continued to stand on one leg without losing her balance.

When the evening came, all the other tin soldiers were put into their box, and the people in the house went to bed. Now the toys began to play at "visiting," and at "war," and "giving balls." The tin soldiers rattled in their box, for they wanted to join, but could not lift the lid. The Nut-cracker threw somersaults, and the Pencil amused itself on the table; there was so much noise that the Canary woke up, and began to speak too, and even in verse. The only two who did not stir from their places were the Tin Soldier and the Dancing Lady; she stood straight up on the point of one of her toes, and stretched out both her arms: and he was just as enduring on his one leg; and he never turned his eyes away from her.

Now the clock struck twelve — and, bounce! — the lid flew off the snuff-box; but there was not snuff in it, but a little black goblin; you see, it was a trick.

"Tin Soldier," said the Goblin, "don't stare at things that don't concern you."

But the Tin Soldier pretended not to hear him.

"Just you wait till to-morrow!" said the Goblin.

But when the morning came, and the children got up, the

Tin Soldier was placed in the window; and whether it was the Goblin or the draught that did it, all at once the window flew open, and the Soldier fell, head over heels, out of the third story. That was a terrible passage! He put his leg straight up, and struck with his helmet downward, and his bayonet between the paving-stones.

The servant-maid and the little boy came down directly to look for him, but though they almost trod upon him they could not see him. If the Soldier had cried out, "Here I am!" they would have found him; but he did not think it fitting to call out loudly, because he was in uniform.

Now it began to rain; the drops soon fell thicker, and at last it came down in a complete stream. When the rain was past, two street boys came by.

"Just look!" said one of them, "there lies a tin soldier. He must come out and ride in the boat,"

And they made a boat out of a newspaper, and put the Tin Soldier in the middle of it; and so he sailed down the gutter, and the two boys ran beside him and clapped their hands. Goodness preserve us! how the waves rose in that gutter, and how fast the stream ran! But then it had been a heavy rain. The paper boat rocked up and down, and sometimes turned round so rapidly that the Tin Soldier trembled; but he remained firm, and never changed countenance, and looked straight before him, and shouldered his musket.

All at once the boat went into a long drain, and it became as dark as if he had been in his box.

"Where am I going now?" he thought. "Yes, yes, that's the Goblin's fault. Ah! if the little Lady only sat here with me in the boat, it might be twice as dark for what I should care."

Suddenly there came a great water-rat, which lived under the drain.

"Have you a passport?" said the Rat. "Give me your passport."

But the Tin Soldier kept silence, and only held his musket tighter than ever.

The boat went on, but the Rat came after it. Hu! how he gnashed his teeth, and called out to the bits of straw and wood, —

"Hold him! hold him! he hasn't paid toll — he hasn't shown his passport!"

But the stream became stronger and stronger. The Tin Soldier could see the bright daylight where the arch ended; but he heard a roaring noise, which might well frighten a bolder man. Only think — just where the tunnel ended, the drain ran into a great canal; and for him that would have been as dangerous as for us to be carried down a great waterfall.

Now he was already so near it that he could not stop. The boat was carried out, the poor Tin Soldier stiffening himself as much as he could, and no one could say that he moved an eyelid. The boat whirled round three or four times, and was full of water to the very edge — it must sink. The Tin Soldier stood up to his neck in water, and the boat sank deeper and deeper, and the paper was loosened more and more; and now the water closed over the Soldier's head. Then he thought of the pretty little Dancer, and how he should never see her again; and it sounded in the Soldier's ears: —

"Farewell, farewell, thou warrior brave,
Die shalt thou this day."

And now the paper parted, and the Tin Soldier fell out; but at that moment he was snapped up by a great fish.

O, how dark it was in that fish's body! It was darker yet than in the drain tunnel; and then it was very narrow, too. But the Tin Soldier remained unmoved, and lay at full length, shouldering his musket.

The fish swam to and fro; he made the most wonderful movements, and then became quite still. At last something flashed through him like lightning. The daylight shone quite clear, and a voice said aloud, "The Tin Soldier!" The fish had been caught, carried to market, bought, and taken into the kitchen, where the cook cut him open with a large knife. She seized the Soldier round the body with both her hands, and carried him into the room, where all were anxious to see the remarkable man who had travelled about in the inside of a fish; but the Tin Soldier was not at all proud. They placed him on the table, and there — no! What curious things may happen in the world! The Tin Soldier was

in the very room in which he had been before! he saw the same children, and the same toys stood upon the table; and there was the pretty castle with the graceful little Dancer. She was still balancing herself on one leg, and held the other extended in the air. She was faithful too. That moved the Tin Soldier: he was very near weeping tin tears, but that would not have been proper. He looked at her, but they said nothing to each other.

Then one of the little boys took the Tin Soldier and flung him into the stove. He gave no reason for doing this. It must have been the fault of the Goblin in the snuff box.

The Tin Soldier stood there quite illuminated, and felt a heat that was terrible; but whether this heat proceeded from the real fire or from love he did not know. The colors had quite gone off from him; but whether that had happened on the journey, or had been caused by grief, no one could say. He looked at the little Lady, she looked at him, and he felt that he was melting; but he stood firm, shouldering his musket. Then suddenly the door flew open, and the draught of air caught the Dancer, and she flew like a sylph just into the stove to the Tin Soldier, and flashed up in a flame, and then was gone! Then the Tin Soldier melted down into a lump, and when the servant-maid took the ashes out next day, she found him in the shape of a little tin heart. But of the Dancer nothing remained but the tinsel rose, and that was burned as black as a coal.

SUNSHINE STORIES.

NOW I am going to tell a story," said the Wind.

"Excuse me," said the Rain," but now it is my turn; you have been howling round the corner as hard as ever you could, this long time past."

"Is that your gratitude toward me?" said the Wind. "I who, in honor of you, turn inside out — yes, even break — all the umbrellas, when people won't have anything to do with you."

"I am going to speak!" said the Sunshine. "Silence!" And the Sunshine said it with such glory and majesty, that the long, weary Wind fell prostrate, and the Rain beat against him, and shook him, and said, — "We won't stand it! She always breaks through, that Madam Sunshine; we won't listen to her. What she says is not worth hearing."

But the Sunshine said, — "A beautiful swan flew over the rolling, tumbling waves of the ocean. Every one of its feathers shone like gold: one feather drifted down on the great merchant vessel that, with all sail set, was sailing away. The feather dropped on the curly light hair of a young man, whose business it was to have a care for the goods, — supercargo they called him. The bird of Fortune's feather touched his forehead, became a pen in his hand, and brought him such luck, that very soon he became a wealthy merchant, — rich enough to have bought for himself spurs of gold; rich enough to change a golden dish into a nobleman's shield; and I shone on it," said the Sunshine.

"The swan flew further, away over the bright green meadow, where the little shepherd-boy, only seven years old, had lain down in the shadow of the old and only tree there was. The swan, in its flight, kissed one of the leaves of the tree. The leaf fell into the boy's hand, and it was changed to three leaves, to ten, — yes, to a whole book, — and in it he read about all the wonders of nature, about his native language, about faith and knowledge. At night he laid the book under his head, that he might not forget what he had been reading

The wonderful book led him to the school-bench, and thence in search of knowledge. I have read his name among the names of learned men," said the Sunshine.

"The swan flew into the quiet, lonely forest, rested awhile on the dark, deep lake, where the water-lilies grow; where the wild apples are to be found on the shore; where the cuckoo and wild pigeon have their homes.

"A poor woman was in the wood, gathering firewood — branches that had fallen down, and dry sticks; she carried them in a bundle on her back, and in her arms she held her little child. She saw the golden swan, the bird of Fortune, rise from among the reeds on the shore. What was that that glittered? A golden egg, quite warm yet. She laid it in her bosom, and the warmth remained in it. Surely there was life in the egg! She heard a gentle picking inside of the shell, but mistook the sound, and thought it was her own heart that she heard beating.

"At home, in the poor cottage, she took out the egg; 'tick, tick,' it said, as if it had been a valuable gold watch; but that it was not, only an egg — a real, living egg. The egg cracked and opened, and a dear little baby-swan, all feathered as with purest gold, put out its little head; round its neck it had four rings, and as the poor woman had four boys, — three at home, and the little one that she had had with her in the lonely wood, — she understood at once that here was a ring for each boy; and just as she thought of that, the little gold-bird took flight. She kissed each ring, made each of the children kiss one of the rings, laid it next to the child's heart, then put it on his finger. I saw it all," said the Sunshine, "and I saw what followed.

"One of the boys was playing in a ditch, and took a lump of clay in his hand, turned and twisted and pressed it between his fingers, till it took shape, and was like *Jason*, who went in search of and found the golden fleece.

"The second boy ran out on the meadow, where the flowers stood, — flowers of all imaginable colors; he gathered a handful, and squeezed them so tight that all the juice spurted into his eyes, and some of it wetted the ring. It cribbled and crawled in his thoughts, and in his hands, and after many a

MARLEY

day, and many a year, people in the great city talked of the great painter.

"The third child held the ring so tight in his teeth, that it gave forth sound, an echo of the song in the depth of his heart. Thoughts and feelings rose in beautiful sounds; rose like singing swans; plunged, like swans, into the deep, deep sea. He became a great master, a great composer, of whom every country has the right to say, 'He was mine!'

"And the fourth little one was — yes, he was — the 'ugly duck' of the family; they said he had the pip, and must have pepper and butter, like the little sick chickens, and that he got; but of me he got a warm, sunny kiss," said the Sunshine. "He got ten kisses for one; he was a poet, and was buffeted and kissed, alternately, all his life. But he held what no one could take from him, — the Ring of Fortune, from Dame Fortune's golden swan. His thoughts took wings, and flew up and away, like singing butterflies, — the emblem of immortality!"

"That was a dreadfully long story," said the Wind.

"And O, how stupid and tiresome!" said the Rain. "Blow on me, please, that I may revive a little."

And the Wind blew, and the Sunshine said, — "The swan of Fortune flew over the beautiful bay, where the fishermen had set their nets; the poorest of them wanted to get married, and marry he did. To him the swan brought a piece of amber; amber draws things toward it, and it drew hearts to the house. Amber is the most wonderful incense, and there came a soft perfume, as from a church; there came a sweet breath from out of beautiful nature, that God has made. They were so happy and grateful for their peaceful home, and content even in their poverty. Their life became a real Sunshine story!"

"I think we had better stop now," said the Wind, "the Sunshine has talked long enough, and I am dreadfully bored."

"And I also," said the Rain.

And what do we others, who have heard the story, say?

We say, "Now my story 's done."

THE STONE OF THE WISE MEN.

YOU know the story of Holger the Dane? then we will not repeat it, but ask you if you recollect how "Holger the Dane wandered over the great land of India east, out to the end of the world, to the tree that is called 'The Tree of the Sun,'" as Christen Pedersen says; do you know Christen Pedersen? It is all the same if you do not know him. Holger the Dane gave Prester John his power and authority over India. Do you know about Prester John? Yes; well, it is also just the same if you do not, for he doesn't come into our story. You are to hear of the Tree of the Sun "in India, eastward at the end of the world," as they believed who had not studied their geography, as we have studied it, and now that also is all the same!

The Tree of the Sun was a noble tree, such as we have never seen and shall probably never see. The crown stretched out several miles around; it was really an entire wood; each of its smallest branches formed, in its turn, a whole tree. Palms, beech-trees, pines, plane-trees, and various other kinds grew here, which are found scattered in all other parts of the world; they shot out like small branches from the great boughs, and these large boughs with their windings and knots formed, as it were, valleys and hills, clothed with velvety green and covered with flowers. Everything was like a wide, blooming meadow, or like the most charming garden. Here the birds from all quarters of the world assembled together, — birds from the primeval forests of America, the rose gardens of Damascus, from the deserts of Africa, in which the elephant and the lion boast of being the only rulers. The Polar birds came flying hither, and of course the stork and the swallow were not absent; but the birds were not the only living beings: the stag, the squirrel, the antelope, and a hundred other beautiful and light-footed animals were here at home. The crown of the tree was a wide-spread fragrant garden, and in the midst of it, where the great boughs raised themselves into a green hill, there stood a castle of crystal, with a view toward

every quarter of heaven. Each tower was reared in the form of a lily. Through the stem one could ascend, for within it was a winding stair; one could step out upon the leaves as upon balconies; and up in the calyx of the flower itself was the most beautiful, sparkling round hall, above which no other roof rose but the blue firmament with sun and stars.

Just as much splendor, though in another way, appeared below, in the wide halls of the castle. Here, on the walls, the whole world around was reflected. One saw everything that was done, so that there was no necessity of reading any papers, and, indeed, papers were not obtainable there. Everything was to be seen in living pictures, if one only wished to see it; for too much is still too much even for the wisest man; and this man dwelt here. His name is very difficult — you will not be able to pronounce it, and therefore it may remain unmentioned. He knew everything that a man on earth can know or can get to know; every invention which had already been or which was yet to be made, was known to him; but nothing more, for everything in the world has its limits. The wise King Solomon was only half as wise as he, and yet he was very wise, and governed the powers of nature, and held sway over potent spirits; yes, Death itself was obliged to give him every morning a list of those who were to die during the day. But King Solomon himself was obliged to die too; and this thought it was which often in the deepest manner employed the inquirer, the mighty lord in the castle on the Tree of the Sun. He also, however high he might tower above men in wisdom, must die one day. He knew that he and his children also must fade away like the leaves of the forest, and become dust. He saw the human race fade away like the leaves on the tree; saw new men come to fill their places; but the leaves that fell off never sprouted forth again — they fell to dust or were transformed into other parts of plants.

"What happens to man," the Wise Man asked himself, "when the angel of death touches him! What may death be? The body is dissolved. And the soul? Yes, what is the soul? whither doth it go? To eternal life, says the comforting voice of religion; but what is the transition? where does one live,

and how? Above, in heaven, says the pious man; thither we go. Thither?" repeated the Wise Man, and fixed his eyes upon the moon and stars; "up yonder?"

But he saw, from the earthly ball, that above and below were alike changing their position, according as one stood here or there on the rolling globe: and even if he mounted as high as the loftiest mountains of earth rear their heads, to the air which we below call clear and transparent — the pure heaven — a black darkness spread abroad like a cloth, and the sun had a coppery glow and sent forth no rays, and our earth lay wrapped in an orange-colored mist. How narrow were the limits of the corporeal eye, and how little the eye of the soul could see! how little did even the wisest know of that which is the most important to us all!

In the most secret chamber of the castle lay the greatest treasure of the earth, — the Book of Truth. Leaf for leaf, the Wise Man read it through; every man may read in this book, but only by fragments. To many an eye the characters seem to tremble, so that the words cannot be put together; on certain pages the writing often seems so pale, so blurred, that only a blank leaf appears. The wiser a man becomes, the more he will read; and the wisest read most. He knew how to unite the sunlight and the moonlight with the light of reason and of hidden powers; and through this stronger light many things came clearly before him from the page. But in the division of the book whose title is "Life after Death," not even one point was to be distinctly seen. That pained him. Should he not be able here upon earth to obtain a light by which everything should become clear to him that stood written in the Book of Truth?

Like the wise King Solomon, he understood the language of the animals, and could interpret their talk and their songs. But that made him none the wiser. He found out the forces of plants and metals, —the forces to be used for the cure of diseases, for delaying death, — but none that could destroy death. In all created things that were within his reach he sought the light that should shine upon the certainty of an eternal life; but he found it not. The Book of Truth lay before him with leaves that appeared blank. Christianity showed

itself to him in the Bible with words of promise of an eternal life; but he wanted to read it in *his* book; but here he saw nothing written on the subject.

He had five children — four sons, educated as well as the children of the wisest father could be, and a daughter, fair, mild, and clever, but blind; yet this appeared no deprivation to her — her father and brothers were outward eyes to her, and the vividness of her feelings saw for her.

Never had the sons gone farther from the castle than the branches of the tree extended, nor had the sister strayed from home. They were happy children in the land of childhood — in the beautiful, fragrant Tree of the Sun. Like all children, they were very glad when any history was related to them; and the father told them many things that other children would not have understood; but these were just as clever as most grown-up people are among us. He explained to them what they saw in the pictures of life on the castle walls — the doings of men, and the march of events in all the lands of the earth; and often the sons expressed the wish that they could be present at all the great deeds and take part in them; and their father then told them that out in the world it was difficult and toilsome — that the world was not quite what it appeared to them as they looked forth upon it from their beauteous home. He spoke to them of the true, the beautiful, and the good, and told them that these three held together in the world, and that under the pressure they had to endure, they became hardened into a precious stone, clearer than the water of the diamond — a jewel whose splendor had value with God, whose brightness outshone everything, and which was the so-called "Stone of the Wise." He told them how men could attain by investigation to the knowledge of the existence of God, and that through men themselves one could attain to the certainty that such a jewel as the "Stone of the Wise" existed. This narration would have exceeded the perception of other children, but these children understood it, and at length other children, too, will learn to comprehend its meaning.

They questioned their father concerning the true, the beautiful, and the good; and he explained it to them, told them

many things, and told them also that God, when He made man out of the dust of the earth, gave five kisses to His work — fiery kisses, heart kisses — which we now call the five senses. Through these the true, the beautiful, and the good is seen, perceived, and understood ; through these it is valued, protected, and furthered. Five senses have been given corporeally and mentally, inwardly and outwardly, to body and soul.

The children reflected deeply upon all these things ; they meditated upon them by day and by night. Then the eldest of the brothers dreamed a splendid dream. Strangely enough, the second brother had the same dream, and the third, and the fourth brother likewise ; all of them dreamed exactly the same thing, — namely, that each went out into the world and found the " Stone of the Wise," which gleamed like a beaming light on his forehead when, in the morning dawn, he rode back on his swift horse over the velvety green meadows of his home into the castle of his father ; and the jewel threw such a heavenly light and radiance upon the leaves of the book, that everything was illuminated that stood written concerning the life beyond the grave. But the sister dreamed nothing about going out into the wide world ; it never entered her mind. Her world was her father's house.

" I shall ride forth into the wide world," said the eldest brother. " I must try what life is like there, and go to and fro among men. I will practice only the good and the true ; with these I will protect the beautiful. Much shall change for the better when I am there."

Now his thoughts were bold and great, as our thoughts generally are at home, before we have gone forth into the world, and have encountered wind and rain, and thorns and thistles.

In him and in all his brothers the five senses were highly developed, inwardly and outwardly ; but each of them had *one* sense which in keenness and development surpassed the other four. In the case of the eldest this preëminent sense was Sight. This was to do him especial service. He said he had eyes for all time, eyes for all nations, eyes that could look into the depths of the earth, where the treasures lie hidden, and deep into the hearts of men, as though nothing but a pane

of glass was placed before them; he could read more than we can see on the cheek that blushes or grows pale, in the eye that droops or smiles. Stags and antelopes escorted him to the boundary of his home toward the west, and there the wild swans received him and flew northwest. He followed them. And now he had gone far out into the world — far from the land of his father, that extended eastward to the end of the earth.

But how he opened his eyes in astonishment! Many things were here to be seen; and many things appear very different when a man beholds them with his own eyes, or when he merely sees them in a picture, as the son had done in his father's house, however faithful the picture may be. At the outset he nearly lost his eyes in astonishment at all the rubbish and all the masquerading stuff put forward to represent the beautiful; but he did not quite lose them, and soon found full employment for them. He wished to go thoroughly and honestly to work in the understanding of the beautiful, the true, and the good. But how were these represented in the world? He saw that often the garland that belonged to the beautiful was given to the hideous; that the good was often passed by without notice, while mediocrity was applauded when it should have been hissed off. People looked to the dress, and not to the wearer; asked for a name, and not for desert; and went more by reputation than by service. It was the same thing everywhere.

"I see I must attack these things vigorously," he said, and attacked them with vigor accordingly.

But while he was looking for the truth, came the Evil One the father of lies. Gladly would the fiend have plucked out the eyes of this Seer; but that would have been too direct: the devil works in a more cunning way. He let him see and seek the true and the good; but while the young man was contemplating them, the Evil Spirit blew one mote after another into each of his eyes; and such a proceeding would be hurtful even to the best sight Then the fiend blew upon the motes, so that they became beams; and the eyes were destroyed, and the Seer stood like a blind man in the wide world, and had no faith in it: he lost his good opinion of it

and himself; and when a man gives up the world and himself, all is over with him.

"Over!" said the wild swan, who flew across the sea toward the east. "Over!" twittered the swallows, who likewise flew eastward, toward the Tree of the Sun. That was no good news that they carried to the young man's home.

"I fancy the *Seer* must have fared badly," said the second brother; "but the *Hearer* may have better fortune." For this one possessed the sense of hearing in an eminent degree: he could hear the grass grow, so quick was he to hear.

He took a hearty leave of all at home, and rode away, provided with good abilities and good intentions. The swallows escorted him, and he followed the swans; and he stood far from his home in the wide world.

But he experienced the fact that one may have too much of a good thing. His hearing was *too* fine. He not only heard the grass grow, but could hear every man's heart beat, in sorrow and in joy. The whole world was to him like a great clockmaker's workshop, wherein all the clocks were going "tick, tick!" and all the turret clocks striking "ding dong." It was unbearable. For a long time his ears held out, but at last all the noise and screaming became too much for one man. There came blackguard boys of sixty years old — for years alone don't make men — and raised a tumult at which the Hearer might certainly have laughed, but for the applause which followed, and which echoed through every house and street, and was audible even in the country high road. Falsehood thrust itself forward and played the master; the bells on the fool's cap jangled and declared they were church bells; and the noise became too bad for the Hearer, and he thrust his fingers into his ears; but still he could hear false singing and bad sounds, gossip and idle words, scandal and slander, groaning and moaning without and within. Heaven help us! He thrust his fingers deeper and deeper into his ears, but at last the drums burst. Now he could hear nothing at all of the good, the true, and the beautiful, for his hearing was to have been the bridge by which he crossed. He became silent and suspicious, trusted no one at last, not even himself; and,

no longer hoping to find and bring home the costly jewel, he gave it up, and gave himself up; and that was the worst of all. The birds who winged their flight toward the east brought tidings of this, till the news reached the castle in the Tree of the Sun.

"*I* will try now!" said the third brother. "I have a sharp *nose!*"

Now that was not said in very good taste; but it was his way, and one must take him as he was. He had a happy temper, and was a poet, a real poet: he could sing many things that he could not say, and many things struck him far earlier than they occurred to others. "I can smell fire!" he said; and he attributed to the sense of smelling, which he possessed in a very high degree, a great power in the region of the beautiful.

"Every fragrant spot in the realm of the beautiful has its frequenters," he said. "One man feels at home in the atmosphere of the tavern, among the flaring tallow candles, where the smell of spirits mingles with the fumes of bad tobacco. Another prefers sitting among the overpowering scent of jessamine, or scenting himself with strong clove oil. This man seeks out the fresh sea-breeze, while that one climbs to the highest mountain-top and looks down upon the busy little life beneath."

Thus he spake. It seemed to him as if he had already been out in the world, as if he had already associated with men and known them. But this experience arose from within himself: it was the poet within him, the gift of Heaven, and bestowed on him in his cradle.

He bade farewell to his paternal roof in the Tree of the Sun, and departed on foot through the pleasant scenery of home. Arrived at its confines, he mounted on the back of an ostrich, which runs faster than a horse; and afterward, when he fell in with the wild swans, he swung himself on the strongest of them, for he loved change; and away he flew over the sea to distant lands with great forests, deep lakes, mighty mountains, and proud cities; and wherever he came it seemed as if sunshine travelled with him across the fields, for every

flower, every bush, every tree exhaled a new fragrance, in the consciousness that a friend and protector was in the neighborhood, who understood them and knew their value. The crippled rose-bush reared up its twigs, unfolded its leaves, and bore the most beautiful roses; every one could see it, and even the black, damp Wood Snail noticed its beauty.

"I will give my seal to the flower," said the Snail; "I have spit at it, and I can do no more for it."

"Thus it always fares with the beautiful in this world!" said the Poet.

And he sang a song concerning it, sang it in his own way; but nobody listened. Then he gave the Drummer twopence and a peacock's feather, and set the song for the drum, and had it drummed in all the streets of the town; and the people heard it, and said, "That's a well-constructed song." Then the Poet sang several songs of the beautiful, the true, and the good. His songs were listened to in the tavern, where the tallow candles smoked, in the fresh meadow, in the forest, and on the high seas. It appeared as if this brother was to have better fortune than the two others. But the Evil Spirit was angry at this, and accordingly he set to work with incense powder and incense smoke, which he can prepare so artfully as to confuse an angel, and how much more, therefore, a poor poet! The Evil One knows how to take that kind of people! He surrounded the Poet so completely with incense, that the man lost his head, and forgot his mission and his home, and at last himself — and ended in smoke.

But when the little birds heard of this they mourned, and for three days they sang not one song. The black Wood Snail became blacker still, not for grief, but for envy.

"They should have strewed incense for me," she said, "for it was I who gave him his idea of the most famous of his songs, the drum song of 'The Way of the World;' it was I who spat at the rose! I can bring witness to the fact."

But no tidings of all this penetrated to the Poet's home in India, for all the birds were silent for three days: and when the time of mourning was over, their grief had been so deep that they had forgotten for whom they wept. That's the usual way!

"Now I shall have to go out into the world, to disappear like the rest," said the fourth brother.

He had just as good a wit as the third, but he was no poet, though he could be witty. Those two had filled the castle with cheerfulness, and now the last cheerfulness was going away. Sight and hearing have always been looked upon as the two chief senses of men, and as the two that it is most desirable to sharpen; the other senses are looked upon as of less consequence. But that was not the opinion of this son, as he had especially cultivated his *taste* in every respect, and taste is very powerful. It holds sway over what goes into the mouth, and also over what penetrates into the mind; and consequently this brother tasted everything that was stored up in bottles and pots, saying that this was the rough work of his office. Every man was to him a vessel in which something was seething, every country an enormous kitchen, a kitchen of the mind.

"That is no delicacy," he said; and he wanted to go out and try what was delicate. "Perhaps fortune may be more favorable to me than it was to my brothers," he said. "I shall start on my travels. But what conveyance shall I choose? Are air balloons invented yet?" he asked his father, who knew of all inventions that had been made or that were to be made. But air balloons had not yet been invented, nor steamships, nor railways. "Good: then I shall choose an air balloon," he said; "my father knows how they are made and guided. Nobody has invented them yet, and consequently the people will believe that it is an aërial phantom. When I have used the balloon I will burn it, and for this purpose you must give me a few pieces of the invention that will be made next — I mean chemical matches."

And he obtained what he wanted, and flew away. The birds accompanied him further than they had flown with the other brothers. They were curious to know what would be the result of the flight, and more of them came sweeping up: they thought he was some new bird, and he soon had a goodly following. The air became black with birds; they came on like a cloud — like the cloud of locusts over the land of Egypt.

Now he was out in the wide world.

The air balloon descended over one of the greatest cities, and the aëronaut took up his station on the highest point, on the church steeple. The balloon rose again, which it ought not to have done: where it went to is not known, but that was not a matter of consequence, for it was not yet invented. Then he sat on the church steeple. The birds no longer hovered around him, they had got tired of him, and he was tired of them.

All the chimneys in the town were smoking merrily.

"Those are altars erected to thy honor!" said the Wind, who wished to say something agreeable to him.

He sat boldly up there, and looked down upon the people in the street. There was one stepping along, proud of his purse; another of the key he carried at his girdle, though he had nothing to unlock; one proud of his moth-eaten coat, another of his wasted body.

"Vanity! I must hasten downward, dip my finger in the pot, and taste!" he said. "But for a while I will sit still here, for the wind blows so pleasantly against my back. I'll sit here as long as the wind blows. I'll enjoy a slight rest. 'It is good to sleep long in the morning, when one has much to do,' says the lazy man. I'll stop here as long as this wind blows, for it pleases me."

And there he sat, but he was sitting upon the weathercock of the steeple, which kept turning round and round with him, so that he was under the false impression that the same wind still blew; so he might stay up there a goodly while.

But in India, in the castle in the Tree of the Sun, it was solitary and still, since the brothers had gone away, one after the other.

"It goes not well with them," said the father; "they will never bring the gleaming jewel home: it is not made for me; they are gone, they are dead!"

And he bent down over the Book of Truth, and gazed at the page on which he should read of life after death; but for him nothing was to be seen or learned upon it.

The blind daughter was his consolation and joy; she attached herself with sincere affection to him, and for the sake

of his peace and joy she wished the costly jewel might be found and brought home. With kindly longing she thought of her brothers. Where were they? Where did they live? She wished sincerely that she might dream of them, but it was strange, not even in dreams could she approach them. But at length, one night she dreamed that the voices of her brothers sounded across to her, calling to her from the wide world, and she could not refrain, but went far, far out, and yet it seemed in her dream that she was still in her father's house. She did not meet her brothers, but she felt, as it were, a fire burning in her hand, but it did not hurt her, for it was the jewel she was bringing to her father. When she awoke, she thought for a moment that she still held the stone, but it was the knob of her distaff that she was grasping. During the long night she had spun incessantly, and round the distaff was turned a thread, finer than the finest web of the spider; human eyes were unable to distinguish the separate threads. She had wetted them with her tears, and the twist was strong as a cable. She rose, and her resolution was taken; the dream must be made a reality. It was night, and her father slept. She pressed a kiss upon his hand, and then took her distaff, and fastened the end of the thread to her father's house. But for this, blind as she was, she would never have found her way home; to the thread she must hold fast, and trust not to herself or to others. From the Tree of the Sun she broke four leaves; these she would confide to wind and weather, that they might fly to her brothers as a letter and a greeting in case she did not meet them in the wide world. How would she fare out yonder, she, the poor blind child? But she had the invisible thread to which she could hold fast She possessed a gift which all the others lacked. This was *thoroughness*; and in virtue of this it seemed as if she could see to the tips of her fingers and hear down into her very heart.

And quietly she went forth into the noisy, whirling, wonderful world, and wherever she went the sky grew bright; she felt the warm ray; the rainbow spread itself out from the dark world through the blue air. She heard the song of the birds, and smelt the scent of orange groves and apple or-

chards so strongly that she seemed to taste it. Soft tones and charming songs reached her ear, but also howling and roaring, and thoughts and opinions sounded in strange contradiction to each other. Into the innermost depths of her heart penetrated the echoes of human thoughts and feelings. One chorus sounded darkly, —

"The life of earth is a shadow vain,
A night created for sorrow!"

but then came another strain, —

"The life of earth is the scent of the rose,
With its sunshine and its pleasure."

And if one strophe sounded painfully, —

"Each mortal thinks of himself alone,
This truth has been shown, how often!"

on the other side the answer pealed forth, —

"A mighty stream of warmest love
All through the world shall bear us."

She heard, indeed, the words, —

"In the little petty whirl here below,
Each thing shows mean and paltry;

but then came also the comfort, —

"Many things great and good are achieved,
That the ear of man heareth never."

And if sometimes the mocking strain sounded around her, —

"Join in the common cry; with a jest
Destroy the good gifts of the Giver,"

in the Blind Girl's heart a stronger voice repeated, —

"To trust in thyself and in God is best;
His will be done forever."

And whenever she entered the circle of human kind, and appeared among young or old, the knowledge of the true, the good, and the beautiful beamed into their hearts. Whether she entered the study of the artist, or the festive decorated hall, or the crowded factory, with its whirring wheels, it seemed as though a sunbeam were stealing in — as if the sweet string sounded, the flower exhaled its perfume, and a living dew-drop fell upon the exhausted blood.

But the Evil Spirit could not see this and be content. He has more cunning than ten thousand men, and he found out a way to compass his end. He betook himself to the marsh, collected little bubbles of the stagnant water, and passed over them a sevenfold echo of lying words to give them strength. Then he pounded up paid-for heroic poems and lying epitaphs, as many as he could get, boiled them in tears that envy had shed, put upon them rouge he had scraped from faded cheeks, and of these he composed a maiden, with the aspect and gait of the blessed Blind Girl, the angel of thoroughness; and then the Evil One's plot was in full progress. The world knew not which of the two was the true one; and, indeed, how should the world know?

> "To trust in thyself and in God is best;
> His good will be done forever,"

sung the Blind Girl, in full faith. She intrusted the four green leaves from the Tree of the Sun to the winds, as a letter and a greeting to her brothers, and had full confidence that they would reach their destination, and that the jewel would be found which outshines all the glories of the world. From the forehead of humanity it would gleam even to the castle of her father.

"Even to my father's house," she repeated. "Yes, the place of the jewel is on earth, and I shall bring more than the promise of it with me. I feel its glow, it swells more and more in my closed hand. Every grain of truth, were it never so fine, which the sharp wind carried up and whirled toward me, I took up and treasured; I let it be penetrated by the fragrance of the beautiful, of which there is so much in the world, even for the blind. I took the sound of the beating heart engaged in what is good, and added it to the first. All that I bring is but dust, but still it is the dust of the jewel we seek, and in plenty. I have my whole hand full of it."

And she stretched forth her hand toward her father. She was soon at home — she had travelled thither in the flight of thoughts, never having quitted her hold of the invisible thread from the paternal home.

The evil powers rushed with hurricane fury over the Tree

of the Sun, and pressed with a wind-blast against the open doors, and into the sanctuary where lay the Book of Truth.

"It will be blown away by the wind!" said the father, and he seized the hand she had opened.

"No," she replied, with quiet confidence, "it cannot be blown away; I feel the beam warming my very soul."

And the father became aware of a glancing flame, there where the shining dust poured out of her hand over the Book of Truth, that was to tell of the certainty of an everlasting life; and on it stood one shining word — one only word —

"BELIEVE."

And with the father and daughter were again the four brothers. When the green leaf fell upon the bosom of each, a longing for home had seized them and led them back. They had arrived. The birds of passage, and the stag, the antelope, and all the creatures of the forest followed them, for all wished to have a part in their joy.

We have often seen, where a sunbeam bursts through a crack in the door into the dusty room, how a whirling column of dust seems circling round; but this was not poor and insignificant like common dust, for even the rainbow is dead in color compared with the beauty which showed itself. Thus, from the leaf of the book with the beaming word "*Believe*," arose every grain of truth, decked with the charms of *the beautiful* and *the good*, burning brighter than the mighty pillar of flame that led Moses and the children of Israel through the desert; and from the word "*Believe*" the bridge of *Hope* arose, spanning the distance, even to the immeasurable love in the realms of the Infinite.

THE DAISY.

NOW you shall hear!

Out in the country, close by the road-side, there was a country-house: you yourself have certainly once seen it. Before it is a little garden with flowers, and a paling which is painted. Close by it, by the ditch, in the midst of the most beautiful green grass, grew a little Daisy. The sun shone as warmly and as brightly upon it as on the great splendid garden flowers, and so it grew from hour to hour. One morning it stood in full bloom, with its little shining white leaves spreading like rays round the little yellow sun in the centre. It never thought that no man would notice it down in the grass, and that it was a poor despised floweret; no, it was very merry, and turned to the warm sun, looked up at it, and listened to the Lark caroling high in the air.

The little Daisy was as happy as if it were a great holiday, and yet it was only a Monday. All the children were at school; and while they sat on their benches learning, it sat on its little green stalk, and learned also from the warm sun, and from all around, how good God is. And the Daisy was very glad that everything that it silently felt was sung so loudly and charmingly by the Lark. And the Daisy looked

up with a kind of respect to the happy bird who could sing and fly; but it was not at all sorrowful because it could not fly and sing also.

"I can see and hear," it thought: "the sun shines on me, and the forest kisses me. O, how richly have I been gifted!"

Within the palings stood many stiff, aristocratic flowers — the less scent they had the more they flaunted: The peonies blew themselves out to be greater than the roses, but size will not do it; the tulips had the most splendid colors, and they knew that, and held themselves bolt upright, that they might be seen more plainly. They did not notice the little Daisy outside there, but the Daisy looked at them the more, and thought, "How rich and beautiful they are! Yes, the pretty bird flies across to them and visits them. I am glad that I stand so near them, for at any rate I can enjoy the sight of their splendor!" And just as she thought that — "keevit!" — down came flying the Lark, but not down to the peonies and tulips — no, down into the grass to the lowly Daisy, which started so with joy that it did not know what to think.

The little bird danced round about it, and sang, —

"O, how soft the grass is! and see what a lovely little flower, with gold in its heart and silver on its dress!"

For the yellow point in the Daisy looked like gold, and the little leaves around it shone silvery white.

How happy was the little Daisy — no one can conceive how happy! The bird kissed it with his beak, sang to it, and then flew up again into the blue air. A quarter of an hour passed, at least, before the Daisy could recover itself. Half ashamed, yet inwardly rejoiced, it looked at the other flowers in the garden, for they had seen the honor and happiness it had gained, and must understand what a joy it was. But the tulips stood up twice as stiff as before, and they looked quite peaky in the face and quite red, for they had been vexed. The peonies were quite wrong-headed: it was well they could not speak, or the Daisy would have received a good scolding. The poor little flower could see very well that they were not in a good humor, and that hurt it sensibly. At this moment there came into the garden a girl with a great sharp, shining knife; she went straight up to the tulips, and cut off one after another of them.

"O!" sighed the little Daisy, "that is dreadful! Now it is all over with them."

Then the girl went away with the tulips. The Daisy was glad to stand out in the grass, and to be only a poor little flower; it felt very grateful; and when the sun went down it folded its leaves and went to sleep, and dreamed all night long about the sun and the pretty little bird.

The next morning, when the flower again happily stretched out all its white leaves, like little arms, toward the air and the light, it recognized the voice of the bird, but the song he was singing sounded mournfully. Yes, the poor Lark had good reason to be sad: he was caught, and now sat in a cage close by the open window. He sang of free and happy roaming, sang of the young green corn in the fields, and of the glorious journey he might make on his wings high through the air. The poor Lark was not in good spirits, for there he sat a prisoner in a cage.

The little Daisy wished very much to help him. But what was it to do? Yes, that was difficult to make out. It quite forgot how everything was so beautiful around, how warm the sun shone, and how splendidly white its own leaves were. Ah! it could think only of the imprisoned bird, and how it was powerless to do anything for him.

Just then two little boys came out of the garden. One of them carried in his hand the knife which the girl had used to cut off the tulips. They went straight up to the little Daisy, which could not at all make out what they wanted.

"Here we may cut a capital piece of turf for the Lark," said one of the boys; and he began to cut off a square patch round about the Daisy, so that the flower remained standing in its piece of grass.

"Tear off the flower!" said the other boy.

And the Daisy trembled with fear, for to be torn off would be to lose its life; and now it wanted particularly to live, as it was to be given with the piece of turf to the captive Lark.

"No, let it stay," said the other boy; "it makes such a nice ornament."

And so it remained, and was put into the Lark's cage. But the poor bird complained aloud of his lost liberty, and beat

his wings against the wires of his prison; and the little Daisy could not speak — could say no consoling word to him, gladly as it would have done so. And thus the whole morning passed.

"Here is no water," said the captive Lark. "They are all gone out, and have forgotten to give me anything to drink. My throat is dry and burning. It is like fire and ice within me, and the air is so close. O, I must die! I must leave the warm sunshine, the fresh green, and all the splendor that God has created!"

And then he thrust his beak into the cool turf to refresh himself a little with it. Then the bird's eye fell upon the Daisy, and he nodded to it, and kissed it with his beak, and said, —

"You also must wither in here, poor little flower. They have given you to me with the little patch of green grass on which you grow, instead of the whole world which was mine out there! Every little blade of grass shall be a great tree for me, and every one of your fragrant leaves a great flower. Ah, you only tell me how much I have lost!"

"If I could only comfort him!" thought the Daisy.

It could not stir a leaf; but the scent which streamed forth from its delicate leaves was far stronger than is generally found in these flowers; the bird also noticed that, and though he was fainting with thirst, and in his pain plucked up the green blades of grass, he did not touch the flower.

The evening came on, and yet nobody appeared to bring the poor bird a drop of water. Then he stretched out his pretty wings and beat the air frantically with them; his song changed to a mournful piping, his little head sank down toward the flower, and the bird's heart broke with want and yearning. Then the flower could not fold its leaves, as it had done on the previous evening, and sleep; it drooped, sorrowful and sick, toward the earth.

Not till the next morn did the boys come; and when they found the bird dead they wept — wept many tears, — and dug him a neat grave, which they adorned with leaves of flowers. The bird's corpse was put into a pretty red box, for he was to be royally buried — the poor bird! While he was alive and

sang they forgot him, and let him sit in his cage and suffer want ; but now that he was dead he had adornment and many tears.

But the patch of turf with the Daisy on it was thrown out into the high road : no one thought of the flower that had felt the most for the little bird, and would have been so glad to console him.

THE SNOW MAN.

"IT is so wonderfully cold that my whole body crackles!" said the Snow Man. "This is a kind of wind that can blow life into one; and how the gleaming one up yonder is staring at me." That was the sun he meant, which was just about to set. "It shall not make *me* wink — I shall manage to keep the pieces."

He had two triangular pieces of tile in his head instead of eyes. His mouth was made of an old rake, and consequently was furnished with teeth.

He had been born amid the joyous shouts of the boys, and welcomed by the sound of sledge bells and the slashing of whips.

The sun went down, and the full moon rose, round, large, clear, and beautiful in the blue air.

"There it comes again from the other side," said the Snow Man. He intended to say the sun is showing himself again. "Ah! I have cured him of staring. Now let him hang up there and shine, that I may see myself. If I only knew how I could manage to move from this place, I should like so much to move. If I could, I would slide along yonder on the ice, just as I see the boys slide; but I don't understand it; I don't know how to run."

"Away! away!" barked the old Yard Dog. He was quite hoarse, and could not pronounce the genuine "bow, wow." He had got the hoarseness from the time when he was an in-door dog, and lay by the fire. "The sun will teach you to run! I saw that last winter in your predecessor, and before that in *his* predecessor. Away! away! and away they all go."

"I don't understand you, comrade," said the Snow Man. "That thing up yonder is to teach me to run?" He meant the moon. "Yes, it was running itself, when I saw it a little while ago, and now it comes creeping from the other side."

"You know nothing at all," retorted the Yard Dog. "But then you've only just been patched up. What you see yonder

is the moon, and the one that went before was the sun. It will come again to-morrow, and will teach you to run down into the ditch by the wall. We shall soon have a change of weather; I can feel that in my left hind leg, for it pricks and pains me: the weather is going to change."

"I don't understand him," said the Snow Man; "but I have a feeling that he's talking about something disagreeable. The one who stared so just now, and whom he called the sun, is not my friend. I can feel that."

"Away! away!" barked the Yard Dog; and he turned round three times, and then crept into his kennel to sleep.

The weather really changed. Towards morning a thick, damp fog lay over the whole region; later there came a wind, an icy wind. The cold seemed quite to seize upon one; but when the sun rose, what splendor! Trees and bushes were covered with hoar-frost, and looked like a complete forest of coral, and every twig seemed covered with gleaming white buds. The many delicate ramifications, concealed in summer by the wreath of leaves, now made their appearance: it seemed like a lace-work, gleaming white. A snowy radiance sprang from every twig. The birch waved in the wind — it had life, like the rest of the trees in summer. It was wonderfully beautiful. And when the sun shone, how it all gleamed and sparkled, as if diamond dust had been strewn everywhere, and big diamonds had been dropped on the snowy carpet of the earth! or one could imagine that countless little lights were gleaming, whiter than even the snow itself.

"That is wonderfully beautiful," said a young girl, who came with a young man into the garden. They both stood still near the Snow Man, and contemplated the glittering trees. "Summer cannot show a more beautiful sight," said she; and her eyes sparkled.

"And we can't have such a fellow as this in summer-time," replied the young man, and he pointed to the Snow Man. "He is capital."

The girl laughed, nodded to the Snow Man, and then danced away over the snow with her friend — over the snow that cracked and crackled under her tread as if she were walking on starch.

"Who were those two?" the Snow Man inquired of the Yard Dog. "You've been longer in the yard than I. Do you know them?"

"Of course I know them," replied the Yard Dog. "She has stroked me, and he has thrown me a meat bone. I don't bite those two."

"But what are they?" asked the Snow Man.

"Lovers!" replied the Yard Dog. "They will go to live in the same kennel, and gnaw at the same bone. Away! away!"

"Are they the same kind of beings as you and I?" asked the Snow Man.

"Why, they belong to the master," retorted the Yard Dog. "People certainly know very little who were only born yesterday. I can see that in you. I have age and information. I know every one here in the house, and I know a time when I did not lie out here in the cold, fastened to a chain. Away! away!"

"The cold is charming," said the Snow Man. "Tell me, tell me. But you must not clank with your chain, for it jars within me when you do that."

"Away! away!" barked the Yard Dog. "They told me I was a pretty little fellow: then I used to lie in a chair covered with velvet, up in master's house, and sit in the lap of the mistress of all. They used to kiss my nose, and wipe my paws with an embroidered handkerchief. I was called 'Ami — dear Ami — sweet Ami.' But afterward I grew too big for them, and they gave me away to the housekeeper. So I came to live in the basement story. You can look into that from where you are standing, and you can see into the room where I was master; for I was master at the housekeeper's. It was certainly a smaller place than up-stairs, but I was more comfortable, and was not continually taken hold of and pulled about by children as I had been. I received just as much good food as ever, and even better. I had my own cushion, and there was a stove, the finest thing in the world at this season. I went under the stove, and could lie down quite beneath it. Ah! I still sometimes dream of that stove. Away! away!"

"Does a stove look so beautiful?" asked the Snow Man. "Is it at all like me?"

"It's just the reverse of you. It's as black as a crow, and has a long neck and a brazen drum. It eats firewood, so that the fire spurts out of its mouth. One must keep at its side or under it, and there one is very comfortable. You can see it through the window from where you stand."

And the Snow Man looked and saw a bright, polished thing with a brazen drum, and the fire gleamed from the lower part of it. The Snow Man felt quite strangely; an odd emotion came over him; he knew not what it meant, and could not account for it; but all people who are not snow men know the feeling.

"And why did you leave her?" asked the Snow Man, for it seemed to him that the stove must be of the female sex. "How could you quit such a comfortable place?"

"I was obliged," replied the Yard Dog. "They turned me out-of-doors, and chained me up here. I had bitten the youngest young master in the leg, because he kicked away the bone I was gnawing. 'Bone for bone,' I thought. They took that very much amiss, and from that time I have been fastened to a chain and have lost my voice. Don't you hear how hoarse I am? Away! away! I can't talk any more like other dogs. Away! away! that was the end of the affair."

But the Snow Man was no longer listening to him. He was looking in at the housekeeper's basement lodging, into the room where the stove stood on its four iron legs, just the same size as the Snow Man himself.

"What a strange crackling within me!" he said. "Shall I ever get in there? It is an innocent wish, and our innocent wishes are certain to be fulfilled. I must go in there and lean against her, even if I have to break through the window."

"You'll never get in there," said the Yard Dog; "and if you approach the stove you'll melt away — away!"

"I am as good as gone," replied the Snow Man. "I think I am breaking up."

The whole day the Snow Man stood looking in through the window. In the twilight hour the room became still more inviting: from the stove came a mild gleam, not like the sun

nor like the moon; no, it was only as the stove can glow when he has something to eat. When the room door opened the flame started out of his mouth; this was a habit the stove had. The flame fell distinctly on the white face of the Snow Man, and gleamed red upon his bosom.

"I can endure it no longer," said he; "how beautiful it looks when it stretches out its tongue!"

The night was long; but it did not appear long to the Snow Man, who stood there lost in his own charming reflections, crackling with the cold.

In the morning the window-panes of the basement lodging were covered with ice. They bore the most beautiful ice flowers that any snow man could desire; but they concealed the stove. The window-panes would not thaw; he could not see the stove, which he pictured to himself as a lovely female. It crackled and whistled in him and around him; it was just the kind of frosty weather a snow man must thoroughly enjoy.

But he did not enjoy it; and, indeed, how could he enjoy himself when he was stove-sick?

"That's a terrible disease for a Snow Man," said the Yard Dog. "I have suffered from it myself, but I got over it. Away! away!" he barked; and he added, "the weather is going to change."

And the weather did change; it began to thaw. The warmth increased, and the Snow Man decreased. He made no complaint — and that's an infallible sign.

One morning he broke down. And, behold, where he had stood, something like a broomstick remained sticking up out of the ground. It was the pole around which the boys had built him up.

"Ah! now I can understand why he had such an intense longing," said the Yard Dog. "Why, there's a shovel for cleaning out the stove fastened to the pole. The Snow Man had a stove-rake in his body, and that's what moved within him. Now he has got over that, too. Away! away!"

And soon they had got over the winter.

"Away! away!" barked the hoarse Yard Dog: but the girls in the house sang: —

"Green thyme! from your house come out;
Willow, your woolly fingers stretch out;
Lark and cuckoo, cheerfully sing,
For in February is coming the spring;
And with the cuckoo I'll sing too,
Come thou, dear sun, come out, cuckoo!"

And nobody thought any more of the Snow Man.

THE NIGHTINGALE.

IN China, you must know, the Emperor is a Chinaman, and all whom he has about him are Chinamen too. It happened a good many years ago, but that's just why it's worth while to hear the story, before it is forgotten. The Emperor's palace was the most splendid in the world; it was made entirely of porcelain, very costly, but so delicate and brittle that one had to take care how one touched it. In the garden were to be seen the most wonderful flowers, and to the costliest of them silver bells were tied, which sounded, so that nobody should pass by without noticing the flowers. Yes, everything in the Emperor's garden was admirably arranged. And it extended so far, that the gardener himself did not know where the end was. If a man went on and on, he came into a glorious forest with high trees and deep lakes. The wood extended straight down to the sea, which was blue and deep; great ships could sail to and fro beneath the branches of the trees; and in the trees lived a nightingale, which sang so splendidly that even the poor Fisherman, who had many other things to do,

stopped still and listened, when he had gone out at night to throw out his nets, and heard the Nightingale.

"How beautiful that is!" he said; but he was obliged to attend to his property, and thus forgot the bird. But when in the next night the bird sang again, and the Fisherman heard it, he exclaimed again, "How beautiful that is!"

From all the countries of the world travellers came to the city of the Emperor and admired it, and the palace, and the garden, but when they heard the Nightingale, they said, "That is the best of all!"

And the travellers told of it when they came home; and the learned men wrote many books about the town, the palace, and the garden. But they did not forget the Nightingale; that was placed highest of all; and those who were poets wrote most magnificent poems about the Nightingale in the wood by the deep lake.

The books went through all the world, and a few of them once came to the Emperor. He sat in his golden chair, and read, and read: every moment he nodded his head, for it pleased him to peruse the masterly descriptions of the city, the palace, and the garden. "But the Nightingale is the best of all!"—it stood written there.

"What's that?" exclaimed the Emperor. "I don't know the Nightingale at all! Is there such a bird in my empire, and even in my garden? I've never heard of that. To think that I should have to learn such a thing for the first time from books!"

And hereupon he called his Cavalier. This Cavalier was so grand that if any one lower in rank than himself dared to speak to him, or to ask him any question, he answered nothing but "P!"—and that meant nothing.

"There is said to be a wonderful bird here called a Nightingale!" said the Emperor. "They say it is the best thing in all my great empire. Why have I never heard anything about it?"

"I have never heard him named," replied the Cavalier. "He has never been introduced at court."

"I command that he shall appear this evening, and sing before me," said the Emperor. "All the world knows what I possess, and I do not know it myself!"

"I have never heard him mentioned," said the Cavalier. "I will seek for him. I will find him."

But where was he to be found? The Cavalier ran up and down all the staircases, through halls and passages, but no one among all those whom he met had heard talk of the Nightingale. And the Cavalier ran back to the Emperor, and said that it must be a fable invented by the writers of books.

"Your Imperial Majesty cannot believe how much is written that is fiction, besides something that they call the black art."

"But the book in which I read this," said the Emperor, "was sent to me by the high and mighty Emperor of Japan. and therefore it cannot be a falsehood. I will hear the Nightingale! It must be here this evening! It has my imperial favor; and if it does not come, all the court shall be trampled upon after the court has supped!"

"Tsing-pe!" said the Cavalier; and again he ran up and down all the staircases, and through all the halls and corridors; and half the court ran with him, for the courtiers did not like being trampled upon.

Then there was a great inquiry after the wonderful Nightingale, which all the world knew excepting the people at court.

At last they met with a poor little girl in the kitchen, who said, —

"The Nightingale? I know it well; yes, it can sing gloriously. Every evening I get leave to carry my poor sick mother the scraps from the table. She lives down by the strand, and when I get back and am tired, and rest in the wood, then I hear the Nightingale sing. And then the water comes into my eyes, and it is just as if my mother kissed me!"

"Little Kitchen Girl," said the Cavalier, "I will get you a place in the kitchen, with permission to see the Emperor dine, if you will lead us to the Nightingale, for it is announced for this evening."

So they all went out into the wood where the Nightingale was accustomed to sing; half the court went forth. When they were in the midst of their journey a cow began to low.

"O!" cried the court pages, "now we have it! That shows a wonderful power in so small a creature! I have certainly heard it before."

"No, those are cows lowing!" said the little Kitchen Girl. "We are a long way from the place yet."

Now the frogs began to croak in the marsh.

"Glorious!" said the Chinese Court Preacher. "Now I hear it — it sounds just like little church bells."

"No, those are frogs!" said the little Kitchen-maid. "But now I think we shall soon hear it."

And then the Nightingale began to sing.

"That is it!" exclaimed the little Girl. "Listen, listen! and yonder it sits."

And she pointed to a little gray bird up in the boughs.

"Is it possible?" cried the Cavalier. "I should never have thought it looked like that! How simple it looks! It must certainly have lost its color at seeing such grand people around."

"Little Nightingale!" called the little Kitchen-maid, quite loudly, "our gracious Emperor wishes you to sing before him."

"With the greatest pleasure!" replied the Nightingale, and began to sing most delightfully.

"It sounds just like glass bells!" said the Cavalier. "And look at its little throat, how it's working! It's wonderful that we should never have heard it before. That bird will be a great success at court."

"Shall I sing once more before the Emperor?" asked the Nightingale, for it thought the Emperor was present.

"My excellent little Nightingale," said the Cavalier, "I have great pleasure in inviting you to a court festival this evening, when you shall charm his Imperial Majesty with your beautiful singing."

"My song sounds best in the greenwood!" replied the Nightingale; still it came willingly when it heard what the Emperor wished.

The palace was festively adorned. The walls and the flooring, which were of porcelain, gleamed in the rays of thousands of golden lamps. The most glorious flowers, which could

ring clearly, had been placed in the passages. There was a running to and fro, and a thorough draught, and all the bells rang so loudly that one could not hear one's self speak.

In the midst of the great hall, where the Emperor sat, a golden perch had been placed, on which the Nightingale was to sit. The whole court was there, and the little Cook-maid had got leave to stand behind the door, as she had now received the title of a real court cook. All were in full dress, and all looked at the little gray bird, to which the Emperor nodded.

And the Nightingale sang so gloriously that the tears came into the Emperor's eyes, and the tears ran down over his cheeks; and then the Nightingale sang still more sweetly, that went straight to the heart. The Emperor was so much pleased that he said the Nightingale should have his golden slipper to wear round its neck. But the Nightingale declined this with thanks, saying it had already received a sufficient reward.

"I have seen tears in the Emperor's eyes — that is the real treasure to me. An emperor's tears have a peculiar power. I am rewarded enough!" And then it sang again with a sweet, glorious voice.

"That's the most amiable coquetry I ever saw!" said the ladies who stood round about, and then they took water in their mouths to gurgle when any one spoke to them. They thought they should be nightingales too. And the lackeys and chambermaids reported that they were satisfied too; and that was saying a good deal, for they are the most difficult to please. In short, the Nightingale achieved a real success.

It was now to remain at court, to have its own cage, with liberty to go out twice every day and once at night. Twelve servants were appointed when the Nightingale went out, each of whom had a silken string fastened to the bird's leg, which they held very tight. There was really no pleasure in an excursion of that kind.

The whole city spoke of the wonderful bird, and when two people met, one said nothing but "Nightin," and the other said "gale;" and then they sighed, and understood one another. Eleven peddlers' children were named after the bird, but not one of them could sing a note.

One day the Emperor received a large parcel, on which was written "The Nightingale."

"There we have a new book about this celebrated bird," said the Emperor.

But it was not a book, but a little work of art, contained in a box, an artificial nightingale, which was to sing like a natural one, and was brilliantly ornamented with diamonds, rubies, and sapphires. So soon as the artificial bird was wound up, he could sing one of the pieces that he really sang, and then his tail moved up and down, and shone with silver and gold. Round his neck hung a little ribbon, and on that was written, "The Emperor of China's Nightingale is poor compared to that of the Emperor of Japan."

"That is capital!" said they all, and he who had brought the artificial bird immediately received the title, Imperial Head-Nightingale-Bringer.

"Now they must sing together; what a duet that will be!"

And so they had to sing together; but it did not sound very well, for the real Nightingale sang in its own way, and the artificial bird sang waltzes.

"That's not his fault," said the Play-master; "he's quite perfect, and very much in my style."

Now the artificial bird was to sing alone. He had just as much success as the real one, and then it was much handsomer to look at — it shone like bracelets and breastpins.

Three-and-thirty times over did it sing the same piece, and yet was not tired. The people would gladly have heard it again, but the Emperor said that the living Nightingale ought to sing something now. But where was it? No one had noticed that it had flown away out of the open window, back to the greenwood.

"But what is become of that?" said the Emperor.

And all the courtiers abused the Nightingale, and declared that it was a very ungrateful creature.

"We have the best bird, after all," said they.

And so the artificial bird had to sing again, and that was the thirty-fourth time that they listened to the same piece. For all that they did not know it quite by heart, for it was so very difficult. And the Play-master praised the bird partic-

ularly ; yes, he declared that it was better than a nightingale, not only with regard to its plumage and the many beautiful diamonds, but inside as well.

"For you see, ladies and gentlemen, and above all, your Imperial Majesty, with a real nightingale one can never calculate what is coming, but in this artificial bird everything is settled. One can explain it ; one can open it, and make people understand where the waltzes come from, how they go, and how one follows up another."

"Those are quite our own ideas," they all said.

And the speaker received permission to show the bird to the people on the next Sunday. The people were to hear it sing too, the Emperor commanded ; and they did hear it, and were as much pleased as if they had all got tipsy upon tea, for that's quite the Chinese fashion ; and they all said, "O!" and held up their forefingers and nodded. But the poor Fisherman, who had heard the real Nightingale, said, —

"It sounds pretty enough, and the melodies resemble each other, but there's something wanting, though I know not what!"

The real Nightingale was banished from the country and empire. The artificial bird had its place on a silken cushion close to the Emperor's bed ; all the presents it had received, gold and precious stones, were ranged about it ; in title it had advanced to be the High Imperial After-Dinner-Singer, and in rank, to number one on the left hand ; for the Emperor considered that side the most important on which the heart is placed, and even in an emperor the heart is on the left side ; and the Play-master wrote a work of five-and-twenty volumes about the artificial bird ; it was very learned and very long, full of the most difficult Chinese words ; but yet all the people declared that they had read it, and understood it, for fear of being considered stupid, and having their bodies trampled on

So a whole year went by. The Emperor, the court, and all the other Chinese knew every little twitter in the artificial bird's song by heart. But just for that reason it pleased them best — they could sing with it themselves, and they did so. The street boys sang, "Tsi-tsi-tsi-glug-glug!" and the Emperor himself sang it too. Yes, that was certainly famous.

But one evening, when the artificial bird was singing its best, and the Emperor lay in bed listening to it, something inside the bird said, "Whizz!" Something cracked. "Whir-r-r!" All the wheels ran round, and then the music stopped.

The Emperor immediately sprang out of bed, and caused his body physician to be called; but what could *he* do? Then they sent for a watchmaker, and after a good deal of talking and investigation, the bird was put into something like order; but the Watchmaker said that the bird must be carefully treated, for the barrels were worn, and it would be impossible to put new ones in in such a manner that the music would go. There was a great lamentation; only once in a year was it permitted to let the bird sing, and that was almost too much. But then the Play-master made a little speech, full of heavy words, and said this was just as good as before — and so of course it was as good as before.

Now five years had gone by, and a real grief came upon the whole nation. The Chinese were really fond of their Emperor, and now he was ill, and could not, it was said, live much longer. Already a new Emperor had been chosen, and the people stood out in the street and asked the Cavalier how their old Emperor did.

"P!" said he, and shook his head.

Cold and pale lay the Emperor in his great gorgeous bed; the whole court thought him dead, and each one ran to pay homage to the new ruler. The chamberlains ran out to talk it over, and the ladies'-maids had a great coffee party. All about, in all the halls and passages, cloth had been laid down so that no footstep could be heard, and therefore it was quiet there, quite quiet. But the Emperor was not dead yet: stiff and pale he lay on the gorgeous bed with the long velvet curtains and the heavy gold tassels; high up, a window stood open, and the moon shone in upon the Emperor and the artificial bird.

The poor Emperor could scarcely breathe; it was just as if something lay upon his chest: he opened his eyes, and then he saw that it was Death who sat upon his chest, and had put on his golden crown, and held in one hand the Emperor's sword, and in the other his beautiful banner. And all around, from among the folds of the splendid velvet curtains, strange heads

peered forth; a few very ugly, the rest quite lovely and mild. These were all the Emperor's bad and good deeds, that stood before him now that Death sat upon his heart.

"Do you remember this?" whispered one to the other. "Do you remember that?" and then they told him so much that the perspiration ran from his forehead.

"I did not know that!" said the Emperor. "Music! music! the great Chinese drum!" he cried, "so that I need not hear all they say!"

And they continued speaking, and Death nodded like a Chinaman to all they said.

"Music! music!" cried the Emperor. "You little precious golden bird, sing, sing! I have given you gold and costly presents; I have even hung my golden slipper around your neck — sing now, sing!"

But the bird stood still; no one was there to wind him up, and he could not sing without that; but Death continued to stare at the Emperor with his great hollow eyes, and it was quiet, fearfully quiet.

Then there sounded from the window, suddenly, the most lovely song. It was the little live Nightingale, that sat outside on a spray. It had heard of the Emperor's sad plight, and had come to sing to him of comfort and hope. And as it sang the spectres grew paler and paler; the blood ran quicker and more quickly through the Emperor's weak limbs; and even Death listened, and said, —

"Go on, little Nightingale, go on!"

"But will you give me that splendid golden sword? Will you give me that rich banner? Will you give me the Emperor's crown?"

And Death gave up each of these treasures for a song. And the Nightingale sang on and on; and it sang of the quiet church-yard where the white roses grow, where the elder-blossom smells sweet, and where the fresh grass is moistened by the tears of survivors. Then Death felt a longing to see his garden, and floated out at the window in the form of a cold, white mist.

"Thanks! thanks!" said the Emperor. "You heavenly little bird! I know you well. I banished you from my coun

try and empire, and yet you have charmed away the evil faces from my couch, and banished Death from my heart! How can I reward you?"

"You have rewarded me!" replied the Nightingale. "I have drawn tears from your eyes, when I sang the first time—I shall never forget that. Those are the jewels that rejoice a singer's heart. But now sleep and grow fresh and strong again. I will sing you something."

And it sang, and the Emperor fell into a sweet slumber. Ah! how mild and refreshing that sleep was! The sun shone upon him through the windows, when he awoke refreshed and restored; not one of his servants had yet returned, for they all thought he was dead; only the Nightingale still sat beside him and sang.

"You must always stay with me," said the Emperor. "You shall sing as you please; and I'll break the artificial bird into a thousand pieces."

"Not so," replied the Nightingale. "It did well as long as it could; keep it as you have done till now. I cannot build my nest in the palace to dwell in it, but let me come when I feel the wish; then I will sit in the evening on the spray yonder by the window, and sing you something, so that you may be glad and thoughtful at once. I will sing of those who are happy and of those who suffer. I will sing of good and of evil that remain hidden round about you. The little singing bird flies far around, to the poor fisherman, to the peasant's roof, to every one who dwells far away from you and from your court. I love your heart more than your crown, and yet the crown has an air of sanctity about it. I will come and sing to you—but one thing you must promise me."

"Everything!" said the Emperor; and he stood there in his imperial robes, which he had put on himself, and pressed the sword which was heavy with gold to his heart.

"One thing I beg of you: tell no one that you have a little bird who tells you everything. Then it will go all the better."

And the Nightingale flew away.

The servants came in to look to their dead Emperor, and—yes, there he stood, and the Emperor said "Good morning!"

THE SILVER SHILLING.

THERE was once a shilling. He came out quite bright from the mint, and sprang up, and sang out, "Hurrah! now I'm off into the wide world." And into the wide world he certainly went.

The child held him with soft, warm hands; the miser clutched him in a cold, avaricious palm; the old man turned him goodness knows how many times before parting with him; while careless youth rolled him lightly away. The Shilling was of silver, and had very little copper about him: he had been now a whole year in the world — that is to say, in the country in which he had been struck. But one day he started on his foreign travels; he was the last native coin in the purse borne by his travelling master. The gentleman was himself not aware that he still had this coin until he came across it by chance.

"Why, here's a shilling from home left to me," he said. "Well, he can make the journey with me."

And the Shilling rattled and jumped for joy as it was thrust back into the purse. So here it lay among strange companions, who came and went, each making room for a successor; but the Shilling from home always remained in the bag; which was a distinction for it.

Several weeks had gone by, and the Shilling had travelled far out into the world without exactly knowing where he was, though he learned from the other coins that they were French or Italian. One said they were in such and such a town, another that they had reached such and such a spot; but the Shilling could form no idea of all this. He who has his head in a bag sees nothing; and this was the case with the Shilling. But one day, as he lay there, he noticed that the purse was not shut, and so he crept forward to the opening, to take a look around. He ought not to have done so; but he was inquisitive, and people often have to pay for that. He slipped out into the fob; and when the purse was taken out at night the Shilling remained behind, and was sent out into the pas-

sage with the clothes. There he fell upon the floor: no one heard it, no one saw it.

Next morning the clothes were carried back into the room; the gentleman put them on, and continued his journey, while the Shilling remained behind. The coin was found, and was required to go into service again, so he was sent out with three other coins.

"It is a pleasant thing to look about one in the world," thought the Shilling, "and to get to know strange people and foreign customs."

And now began the history of the Shilling, as told by himself.

"'Away with him! he's bad — no use.' These words went through and through me," said the Shilling. "I know I sounded well and had been properly coined. The people were certainly mistaken. They could not mean me. But, yes, they did mean me: I was the one of whom they said, 'He's bad — he's no good.' 'I must get rid of that fellow in the dark,' said the man who had received me; and I was passed at night, and abused in the daytime. 'Bad — no good!' was the cry: 'we must make haste and get rid of him.'

"And I trembled in the fingers of the holder each time I was to be secretly passed on as a coin of the country.

"What a miserable shilling I am! Of what use is my silver to me, my value, my coinage, if all these things are looked on as worthless? In the eyes of the world one has only the value the world chooses to put upon one. It must be terrible indeed to have a bad conscience, and to creep along on evil ways, if I, who am quite innocent, can feel so badly because I am only thought guilty.

"Each time I was brought out I shuddered at the thought of the eyes that would look at me, for I knew that I should be rejected and flung back upon the table, like an impostor and a cheat. Once I came into the hands of a poor old woman, to whom I was paid for a hard day's work, and she could not get rid of me at all. No one would accept me, and I was a perfect worrit to the old Dame.

"'I shall certainly be forced to deceive some one with

this shilling,' she said; 'for, with the best will in the world, I can't hoard up a false shilling. The rich baker shall have him; he will be able to bear the loss — but it's wrong in me to do it, after all.'

"'And I must lie heavy on that woman's conscience too,' sighed I. 'Am I really so much changed in my old age?'

"And the Woman went her way to the rich baker; but he knew too well what kind of shillings would pass to take me, and he threw me back at the Woman, who got no bread for me. And I felt miserably low to think that I should be the cause of distress to others — I who had been in my young days so proudly conscious of my value and of the correctness of my mintage. I became as miserable as a poor shilling can be whom no one will accept; but the Woman took me home again, and looked at me with a friendly, hearty face, and said, —

"'No, I will not deceive any one with thee. I will bore a hole through thee, that every one may see thou art a false thing. And yet — it just occurs to me — perhaps this is a lucky shilling; and the thought comes so strongly upon me that I am sure it must be true! I will make a hole through the shilling, and pass a string through the hole, and hang the coin round the neck of my neighbor's little boy for a lucky shilling.'

"So she bored a hole through me. It is certainly not agreeable to have a hole bored through one; but many things can be borne when the intention is good. A thread was passed through the hole, and I became a kind of medal, and was hung round the neck of the little child; and the child smiled at me, and kissed me, and I slept all night on its warm, innocent neck.

"When the morning came, the child's mother took me up in her fingers and looked at me, and she had her own thoughts about me — I could feel that very well. She brought out a pair of scissors, and cut the string through.

"'A lucky shilling!' she said. 'Well, we shall soon see that.'

"And she laid me in vinegar, so that I turned quite green. Then she plugged up the hole, and carried me, in the evening

twilight, to the lottery collector, to buy a lottery ticket that should bring her luck.

"How miserably wretched I felt! There was a stinging feeling in me as if I should crumble to bits. I knew that I should be called false and thrown down — and before a crowd of other shillings and coins, too, who lay there with an image and superscription of which they might be proud. But I escaped that disgrace, for there were many people in the collector's room — he had a great deal to do, and I went rattling down into the box among the other coins. Whether my ticket won anything or not I don't know; but this I do know, that the very next morning I was recognized as a bad shilling, and was sent out to deceive and deceive again. That is a very trying thing to bear when one knows one has a good character, and of that I *am* conscious.

"For a year and a day I thus wandered from house to house and from hand to hand, always abused, always unwelcome: no one trusted me; and I lost confidence in the world and in myself. It was a heavy time. At last, one day a traveller, a strange gentleman, arrived, and I was passed to him, and he was polite enough to accept me for current coin; but he wanted to pass me on, and again I heard the horrible cry, 'No use — false!'

"'I received it as a good coin,' said the man, and he looked closely at me: suddenly he smiled all over his face; and I had never seen that expression before on any face that looked at me. 'Why, what ever is that?' he said. 'That's one of our own country coins, a good honest shilling from my home, and they've bored a hole through him, and they call him false. Now, this is a curious circumstance. I must keep him and take him home with me.'

"A glow of joy thrilled through me when I heard myself called a good honest shilling; and now I was to be taken home, where each and every one would know me, and be sure that I was real silver and properly coined. I could have thrown out sparks for very gladness; but, after all, it's not in my nature to throw out sparks, for that's the property of steel, not of silver.

"I was wrapped up in clean white paper, so that I should

not be confounded with the other coins, and spent; and on festive occasions, when fellow-countrymen met together, I was shown about, and they spoke very well of me: they said I was interesting — and it is wonderful how interesting one can be without saying a single word.

"And at last I got home again. All my troubles were ended, joy came back to me, for I was of good silver, and had the right stamp, and I had no more disagreeables to endure, though a hole had been bored through me, as through a false coin: but that does not matter if one is not really false. One must wait for the end, and one will be righted at last — that's my belief," said the Shilling.

THE NAUGHTY BOY.

THERE was once an old poet — a very good old poet. One evening, as he sat at home, there was very bad weather without. The rain streamed down; but the old poet sat comfortably by his stove, where the fire was burning and the roasting apples hissing.

"There won't be a dry thread left on the poor people who are out in this weather!" said he, for he was a good old poet.

"O, open to me! I'm cold and quite wet," said a little child outside; and it cried, and knocked at the door, while the rain streamed down, and the wind made all the casements rattle.

"You poor little creature!" said the Poet; and he went to open the door. There stood a little boy; he was quite naked, and the water ran in streams from his long fair curls. He was shivering with cold, and had he not been let in, he would certainly have perished in the bad weather.

"You little creature!" said the Poet, and took him by the hand, "come to me, and I will warm you. You shall have wine and an apple, for you are a capital boy."

And so he was. His eyes sparkled like two bright stars, and though the water ran down from his fair curls, they fell in beautiful ringlets. He looked like a little angel-child, but was

white with cold, and trembled all over. In his hand he carried a famous bow, but it looked quite spoiled by the wet; all the colors in the beautiful arrows had been blurred together by the rain.

The old Poet sat down by the stove, took the little Boy on his knees, pressed the water out of the long curls, warmed his hands in his own, and made him some sweet wine-whey; then the Boy recovered himself, and his cheeks grew red, and he jumped to the floor, and danced round the old Poet.

"You are a merry boy," said the old Poet. "What is your name?"

"My name is Love," he replied; "don't you know me? There lies my bow — I shoot with that, you may believe me! See, now the weather is clearing up outside, and the moon shines."

"But your bow is quite spoiled," said the good old Poet.

"That would be a pity," replied the little Boy; and he took the bow and looked at it. "O, it is quite dry, and has suffered no damage; the string is quite stiff — I will try it!" Then he bent it, and laid an arrow across, aimed, and shot the good old Poet straight through the heart. "Do you see now that my bow was not spoiled?" said he, and laughed out loud and ran away. What a naughty boy, to shoot at the old Poet in that way, who had admitted him into the warm room, and been so kind to him, and given him the best wine and the best apple!

The good Poet lay upon the floor and wept; he was really shot straight into the heart. "Fie!" he cried, "what a naughty boy this Love is! I shall tell that to all good children, so that they may take care and never play with him, for he will do them a hurt!"

All good children, girls and boys, to whom he told this, took good heed of this naughty Love; but still he tricked them, for he is very cunning. When the students come out from the lectures, he runs at their side with a book under his arm, and has a black coat on. They cannot recognize him at all. And then they take his arm, and fancy he is a student too; but he thrusts the arrow into their breasts. Yes, he is always following people! He sits in the great chandelier in the theatre,

and burns brightly so that the people think he is a lamp ; but afterwards they see their error. He runs about in the palace garden and on the promenades. Yes, he once shot your father and your mother straight through the heart! Only ask them, and you will hear what they say. O, he is a bad boy, this Love ; you must never have anything to do with him. He is after every one. Only think, once he shot an arrow at old grandmamma ; but that was a long time ago. The wound has indeed healed long since, but she will never forget it. Fie on that wicked Love! But now you know him, and what a naughty boy he is.

THE TOAD.

THE well was deep, and so the rope was long, and the wheel went heavily round, before one could hoist the bucket over the side of the well. The sun could not see its face in the water, however brightly it shone; but as far as it could shine there were green weeds growing between the stones.

A family of the toad race dwelt here. They were emigrants; indeed, they had all come plump down in the person of the old toad-mother, who was still alive. The green frogs who swam in the water, had been at home here ever so much longer, but they acknowledged their cousins, and called them the "well-guests." The latter, however, had no thoughts of ever flitting; they made themselves very comfortable here on the dry land, as they called the wet stones.

Dame Frog had once travelled, riding in the bucket as it went up; but the light was too much for her, and gave her spasm in the eyes; luckily she got out of the bucket. She fell with a frightful splash in the water, and lay up for three days with the back-ache. She had not much to tell about the upper world, but one thing she did know, and so did all the others now, — that the well was not the whole world. Dame Toad might have told them a thing or two more, but she never answered any questions, and so they left off asking any.

"Nasty, ugly, squat, and fat she is!" said the young Green Frogs; "and her brats are getting just like her."

"Maybe so!" said Dame Toad, "but one of them has a jewel in its head, or else I have it myself."

The Green Frogs listened and stared, and as they did not like to hear that, they made faces and went to the bottom. But the young Toads stretched their hind-legs out of sheer pride. Each of them thought it had the jewel, and so they all kept their heads quite still; but at last they began to ask what sort of a thing they had to be proud of, and what a jewel *was* exactly.

"It is something so splendid and so precious," said Dame

Toad, "that I cannot describe it; it is something that one wears to please one's self, and that others fret to death after. But don't ask questions; I shan't answer them."

"Well, I have not got the jewel," said the smallest Toad, which was as ugly as ugly could be. "How should I have anything so splendid? and if it vexed others, why, it could not please me. No; all I want is to get up to the well-side, and have one peep out; that would be glorious!"

"Better stay where you are," said the old one. "Here you are at home, and you know what it's like. Keep clear of the bucket, or it may squash you. And even if you get safe into it, you may fall out again, and it is not every one that can fall so luckily as I did, and keep legs and eggs all safe and sound."

"Quack!" said the little one; and that means the same as when we men say "Alack!"

It did so long to get up to the well-side, and look out; it felt quite a yearning after the green things up yonder. And so, next morning, as the bucket was going up, when it happened to stop for an instant before the stone where the Toad sat, the little creature quivered through and through, and edged into the bucket. It sank to the bottom of the water, which was presently drawn up and poured out.

"Phuh, botheration!" said the man, when he saw it; "it is the ugliest I have ever seen." He kicked with his wooden shoe at the Toad, which was near being crippled, but managed to escape into the middle of some tall stinging-nettles. It saw stalks side by side around it, and it looked upward too. The sun shone on the leaves; they were quite transparent. For the Toad it was the same as it is for us men when we come all at once into a great forest, where the sun is shining between leaves and branches.

"It is much prettier here than down in the well! One might well stop here for one's whole life-time," said the little Toad. It lay there one hour, it lay there two. "Now I wonder what there is outside; as I have gone so far, I may as well go further." And it crawled as fast as it could crawl, till it came out into the full sunshine, and got powdered with dust, as it marched across a high road.

"This is something like being on dry land," said the Toad. "I am getting almost too much of a good thing; it tickles right into me."

Now it came to a ditch; the forget-me-not grew here, and the meadow-sweet; beyond it was a hedge of white-thorn and elder-bushes, and the convolvulus crept and hung about it. Here were fine colors to be seen! And yonder flew a butterfly. The Toad thought that it was a flower which had broken loose, in order to look about it in the world; it really seemed so very natural.

"If one could only get along like that!" said the Toad. "Quack — alack, O how glorious!"

For eight days and nights it lingered by the ditch, and felt no want of food. The ninth day it thought, "Further — forward!" But was there anything more beautiful to be found then? perhaps a little toad, or some green frogs; there had been a sound in the wind last night, as if there were "cousins" in the neighborhood.

"It is a fine thing to live! to come up out of the well; to lie in stinging-nettles; to creep along a dusty road; and to rest in a wet ditch! But forward still! let us find out frogs or a little toad; one cannot do without them, after all; nature, by itself, is not enough for one!" And so it set out again on its wanderings.

It came to a field and a large pond, with rushes round it; it took a look inside.

"It is too wet for you here, isn't it?" said the Frogs, "but you are quite welcome. Are you a he or a she? — not that it matters, you are welcome all the same."

And so it was invited to a concert in the evening — a family concert, great excitement and thin voices! we all know that sort of thing. There were no refreshments, except drink; but that was free to all — the whole pond, if they pleased.

"Now I shall travel further," said the little Toad. It was always craving after something better.

It saw the stars twinkle, so large and so clear; it saw the new moon shine; it saw the sun rise higher and higher.

"I think I am still in the well, in a larger well: I must get higher up! I feel a restlessness, a longing!" And when the

moon had grown full and round, the poor creature thought, "Can *that* be the bucket which is being let down, and which I must pop into if I wish to get higher up? Or is the sun the great bucket? How great it is, and how beaming! It could hold all of us together. I must watch for my opportunity. What a brightness in my head! I do not believe that the jewel can shine better. The jewel! I have it not, and shall not cry after it. No; higher still in glitter and gladness! I feel an assurance, and yet a fear; it is a hard step to take, but it must be taken. Forward! right on along the high road!"

And it stepped out as well as such a crawling creature can, till it came to the great thoroughfare, where the men lived. Here there were flower-gardens and cabbage-gardens. It turned aside to rest in a cabbage-garden.

"What a number of different beings there are, which I know nothing about! and how great and blessed is the world! But one must keep looking about one, instead of sitting always in the same corner." And so it sidled into the cabbage-garden. "How green it is here! how pretty it is here!"

"That I know well enough," said the Caterpillar, on the leaf. "My leaf is the largest here; it covers half the world — but as for the world, I can do without it."

"Cluck! cluck!" said somebody, and fowls came tripping into the cabbage-garden. The foremost hen was long-sighted; she spied out the worm on the curly leaf, and pecked at it, so that it fell to the ground, where it lay twisting and turning. The Hen looked first with one eye and then with the other, for she could not make out what was to be the end of all this wriggling.

"It does not do this of its own accord," thought the Hen, and lifted her head for a finishing stroke. The Toad grew so frightened, that it crawled right up against the Hen.

"So it has friends to fight for it," said she; "just look at the crawler!" and the Hen turned tail. "I shan't trouble myself about the little green mouthful; it only gives one a tickling in the throat." The other fowls were of the same opinion, and away they went.

"I have wriggled away from her," said the Caterpillar; "it is good to have presence of mind, but the hardest task remains, to get up on to my cabbage-leaf. Where is it?"

And the little Toad came forward and expressed its sympathies. It was glad of its own ugliness, that had frightened away the Hen.

"What do you mean by that?" asked the Caterpillar. "I got rid of her myself, I tell you. You are very unpleasant to look at! Mayn't I be allowed to get back into my own? Now I smell cabbage. Now I am near my leaf. There is nothing so beautiful as what is one's own. I must go higher up still."

"Yes, higher up!" said the little Toad, "higher up! it feels just as I feel; but it is not in good humor to-day; that comes of the fright. We all wish to get higher up." And it looked up as high as it could.

The stork sat in his nest on the farmer's roof; he clattered, and the stork-mother clattered.

"How high they live," thought the Toad. "Pity that one can't get up there!"

There were two young students lodging in the farm-house; one of them was a poet, the other a naturalist. The one sang and wrote in gladness of all that God had created, even as its image was reflected in his heart; he sang it out short and clear, and rich in resounding verses. The other took hold of the thing itself; aye, and split it up, if necessary. He treated our Lord's creation like some vast piece of arithmetic; subtracted, multiplied, wished to know it outside and inside, and to talk of it with reason; nothing but reason; and he talked of it in gladness too, and cleverly. They were good, glad-hearted men, both of them.

"Yonder sits a fine specimen of a toad," said the Naturalist; "I must have it in spirit."

"You have two already," said the Poet. "Let it sit in peace, and enjoy itself."

"But it is so beautifully ugly!" said the other.

"Yes, if we could find the jewel in its head," said the Poet, "then I myself might lend a hand in splitting it up."

"The jewel!" said the other. "Much you know about natural history!"

"But is there not something very fine, at least, in the popular belief that the toad, the ugliest of creatures, often hides in its head the most precious of all jewels? Is it not much

the same with men? Was there not such a jewel hidden in Æsop, and Socrates too?"

The Toad heard nothing more; and even so far it did not understand half of it. The two friends went on, and it escaped being put into spirit.

"They were talking about the jewel, too," said the Toad. "I am just as well without it; otherwise I should have got into trouble."

There was a clattering upon the farmer's roof. Father Stork was delivering a lecture to his family, while they all looked down askant at the two young men in the cabbage-garden.

"Man is the most conceited of creatures," said the Stork. "Hark, how they are going on — clatter, clatter — and yet they cannot rattle off a regular tattoo. They puff themselves up with notions of their eloquence — their language. A rare language indeed; it shifts from one jabber to another, at every day's journey. Our language we can talk the whole world over, whether in Denmark or in Egypt. As for flying, they can't manage it at all. They push along by means of a contrivance which they call a 'railway,' but there they often get their necks broken. It gives me the shivers in my bill when I think of it. The world can exist without men. What good are they to us? All that we want are frogs and earth-worms."

"That was a grand speech now," thought the little Toad. "What a great man he is, and how high he sits; higher than I have ever seen any one before; and how well he can swim," it exclaimed, as the Stork took flight through the air with outstretched wings.

And Mother Stork talked in the nest. She told of the land of Egypt, of the water of the Nile, and of the first-rate mud that was to be found in foreign parts; it sounded quite fresh and charming in the ears of the little Toad.

"I must go to Egypt," it said. "O, if the Stork would only give me a lift; or one of the young ones might take me. I would do the youngster some service in my turn, on his wedding-day. I am sure I shall get to Egypt, for I am so lucky; and all the longing and the yearning which I feel; surely, this is better than having a jewel in one's head."

And it had it — the true jewel; the eternal longing and yearning to go upward, ever upward. This was the jewel, and it shone within it, shone with gladness and beamed with desire.

At that very moment came the Stork. He had seen the Toad in the grass, and he swooped down and took hold of the little creature, not over tenderly. The bill pinched; the wind whistled; it was not quite comfortable. But still it was going upward, and away to Egypt, it knew; and that was why its eyes glittered, till it seemed as if a spark flew out of them.

"Quack — ack!"

The body was dead, the Toad was killed. But the spark out of its eyes, what became of *that?*

The sunbeam took it; the sunbeam bore away the jewel from the head of the Toad. Whither?

You must not ask the Naturalist; rather ask the Poet. He will tell it you as a fairy tale; and the Caterpillar will take a share in it, and the Stork family will take a share in it. Think, the Caterpillar will be changed, and become a beautiful butterfly! The Stork family will fly over mountains and seas far away to Africa, and yet find the shortest way home again to the Danish land, to the same spot, to the same roof! Yes, it is all nearly too much like a fairy tale — and yet it is true. You may fairly ask the Naturalist about the truth of it; he will admit *that*, and, indeed, you know it yourself, for you have seen it.

But the jewel in the Toad's head? Look for it in the sun; look *at* it if you can.

The splendor is too strong. We have not yet eyes that can look into all the glories which God hath revealed; but some day we shall have them, and that will be the most beautiful fairy tale of all, for we ourselves shall take a share in it.

THE STORKS.

ON the last house in a little village stood a stork's nest. The Mother Stork sat in it with her four young ones, who stretched out their heads with the pointed black beaks, for their beaks had not yet turned red. A little way off stood the Father Stork, all alone on the ridge of the roof, quite upright and stiff; he had drawn up one of his legs, so as not to be quite idle while he stood sentry. One would have thought he had been carved out of wood, so still did he stand. He thought, "It must look very grand, that my wife has a sentry standing by her nest. They can't tell that it is her husband. They certainly think I have been commanded to stand here. That looks so aristocratic!" And he went on standing on one leg.

Below in the street a whole crowd of children were playing; and when they caught sight of the Storks, one of the boldest of the boys, and afterwards all of them, sang the old verse about the Storks. But they only sang it just as he could remember it: —

"Stork, stork, long-legged stork;
Off to thy home I prithee walk.
Thy dear wife is in the nest,
Where she rocks her young to rest.

"The first he will be hanged,
The second will be hit,
The third he will be shot,
And the fourth put on the spit."

"Just hear what those boys are saying!" said the little Stork children. "They say we're to be hanged and killed."

"You're not to care for that!" said the Mother Stork. "Don't listen to it, and then it won't matter."

But the boys went on singing, and pointed at the Storks mockingly with their fingers; only one boy, whose name was Peter, declared that it was a sin to make a jest of animals, and he would not join in it at all.

The Mother Stork comforted her children. "Don't you mind it at all," she said; "see how quiet your father stands, though it's only on one leg."

"We are very much afraid," said the young Storks; and they drew their heads far back into the nest.

Now to-day, when the children came out again to play, and saw the Storks, they sang their song, —

"The first he will be hanged,
The second will be hit."

"Shall we be hanged and beaten?" asked the young Storks.

"No, certainly not," replied the mother. "You shall learn to fly; I'll exercise you; then we shall fly out into the meadows and pay a visit to the frogs; they will bow before us in the water, and sing 'Co-ax! co-ax!' and then we shall eat them up. That will be a real pleasure."

"And what then?" asked the young Storks.

"Then all the Storks will assemble, all that are here in the whole country, and the autumn exercises begin: then one must fly well, for that is highly important, for whoever cannot fly properly will be thrust dead by the general's beak; so take care and learn well when the exercising begins."

"But then we shall be killed, as the boys say — and only listen, now they're singing again."

"Listen to me, and not to them," said the Mother Stork. "After the great review we shall fly away to the warm countries, far away from here, over mountains and forests. We

shall fly to Egypt, where there are three covered houses of stone, which curl in a point and tower above the clouds; they are called pyramids, and are older than a stork can imagine. There is a river in that country which runs out of its bed, and then all the land is turned to mud. One walks about in the mud, and eats frogs."

"O!" cried all the young ones.

"Yes! It is glorious there! One does nothing all day long but eat; and while we are so comfortable over there, here there is not a green leaf on the trees; here it is so cold that the clouds freeze to pieces, and fall down in little white rags!"

It was the snow that she meant, but she could not explain it in any other way.

"And do the naughty boys freeze to pieces?" asked the young Storks.

"No, they do not freeze to pieces; but they are not far from it, and must sit in the dark room and cower. You, on the other hand, can fly about in foreign lands, where there are flowers, and the sun shines warm."

Now some time had elapsed, and the nestlings had grown so large that they could stand upright in the nest and look far around; and the Father Stork came every day with delicious frogs, little snakes, and all kinds of stork-dainties as he found them. O! it looked funny when he performed feats before them! He laid his head quite back upon his tail, and clapped with his beak as if he had been a little clapper; and then he told them stories, all about the marshes.

"Listen! now you must learn to fly," said the Mother Stork one day; and all the four young ones had to go out on the ridge of the roof. O, how they tottered! how they balanced themselves with their wings, and yet they were nearly falling down.

"Only look at me," said the mother. "Thus you must hold your heads! Thus you must pitch your feet! One, two! one, two! That's what will help you on in the world."

Then she flew a little way, and the young ones made a little clumsy leap. Bump!— there they lay, for their bodies were too heavy.

"I will not fly!" said one of the young Storks, and crept back into the nest. "I don't care about getting to the warm countries."

"Do you want to freeze to death here, when the winter comes? Are the boys to come and hang you, and singe you, and roast you? Now I'll call them."

"O no!" cried the young Stork, and hopped out on to the roof again like the rest.

On the third day they could actually fly a little, and then they thought they could also soar and hover in the air. They tried it, but — bump! — down they tumbled, and they had to shoot their wings again quickly enough. Now the boys came into the street again and sang their song, —

"Stork, stork, long legged stork!"

"Shall we fly down and pick their eyes out?" asked the young Storks.

"No," replied the mother, "let them alone. Only listen to me; that's far more important. One, two, three! — now we fly round to the right. One, two, three! — now to the left round the chimney! See, that was very good! the last kick with the feet was so neat and correct that you shall have permission to-morrow to fly with me to the marsh! Several nice Stork families go there with their young: show them that mine are the nicest, and that you can start proudly; that looks well, and will get you consideration."

"But are we not to take revenge on the rude boys?" asked the young Storks.

"Let them scream as much as they like. You will fly up to the clouds, and get to the land of the pyramids, when they will have to shiver, and not have a green leaf or a sweet apple."

"Yes, we will revenge ourselves!" they whispered to one another; and then the exercising went on.

Among all the boys down in the street, the one most bent upon singing the teasing song was he who had begun it, and he was quite a little boy. He could hardly be more than six years old. The young Storks certainly thought he was a hundred, for he was much bigger than their mother and

father; and how should they know how old children and grown-up people can be! Their revenge was to come upon this boy, for it was he who had begun, and he always kept on. The young Storks were very angry; and as they grew bigger they were less inclined to bear it: at last their mother had to promise them that they should be revenged, but not till the last day of their stay.

"We must first see how you behave at the grand review. If you get through badly, so that the general stabs you through the chest with his beak, the boys will be right, at least in one way. Let us see."

"Yes, you shall see!" cried the young Storks; and then they took all imaginable pains. They practiced every day, and flew so neatly and so lightly that it was a pleasure to see them.

Now the autumn came on; all the Storks began to assemble, to fly away to the warm countries while it is winter here. That *was* a review. They had to fly over forests and villages, to show how well they could soar, for it was a long journey they had before them. The young Storks did their parts so well that they got as a mark, "Remarkably well, with frogs and snakes." That was the highest mark; and they might eat the frogs and snakes; and that is what they did.

"Now we will be revenged!" they said.

"Yes, certainly!" said the Mother Stork. "What I have thought of will be the best. I know the pond in which all the little mortals lie till the stork comes and brings them to their parents. The pretty little babies lie there and dream so sweetly as they never dream afterwards. All parents are glad to have such a child, and all children want to have a sister or a brother. Now we will fly to the pond, and bring one for each of the children who have not sung the naughty song and laughed at the Storks."

"But he who began to sing,—that naughty, ugly boy! screamed the young Storks; "what shall we do with him?"

"There is a little dead child in the pond, one that has dreamed itself to death; we will bring that for him. Then he will cry because we have brought him a little dead brother. But that good boy—you have not forgotten him, the one

who said, 'It is wrong to laugh at animals!'—for him we will bring a brother and a sister too. And as his name is Peter, all of you shall be called Peter too."

And it was done as she said; all the Storks were named Peter, and so they are all called even now.

THE NIS AND THE DAME.

YOU have all heard of the Nis, but have you ever heard of the Dame, — the Gardener's Dame? She had plenty of reading; knew verses by heart; aye, and could write them herself with ease; except that the rhymes, "clinchings," as she called them, cost her a little trouble. She had gifts of writing, and gifts of speech; she could well have been priest, or, at all events, the priest's wife.

"The earth is beauteous in her Sunday gown," said she, and this thought she had set in regular form and "clinching;" set it up in a ditty, that was ever so fine and long.

The Under-schoolmaster, Mr. Kisserup (not that it matters about his name), was a cousin of hers, and on a visit at the Gardener's; he heard the Dame's poem, and it did him good, he said — a world of good. "You have soul, ma'am!" said he.

"Fiddle-de-dee!" said the Gardener. "Don't be putting such stuff in her head. Soul indeed! a wife should be a body, a plain, decent body, and watch the pot to see that the porridge is not burnt."

"The burnt taste I can take out of the porridge with a little charcoal," said the Dame, "and out of you with a little kiss. One might fancy you thought of nothing but greens and potatoes; and yet you love the flowers;" and so saying, she kissed him. "Flowers are all soul!" said she.

"Mind your porridge-pot," said he, and went off into the garden. This was his porridge-pot, and this he minded.

But the Under-schoolmaster sat in the Dame's parlor, and talked with the Dame. Her fine words, "Earth is beauteous," he made the text of a whole sermon, after his own fashion.

"Earth is beauteous, make it subject unto you! was said, and we became the lords. Some rule it with the mind, others with the body. This man is sent into the world like an incorporate note of admiration! that man like a dash of hesitation: we pause, and ask, Why is he here? One of us becomes

a bishop; another only a poor under-master; but all is for the best. Earth is beauteous, and always in her Sunday gown! That was a thought-stirring poem, ma'am; full of feeling and cosmography!"

"You have soul, Mr. Kisserup," said the Dame, "a great deal of soul, I assure you. One gains clearness of perception by talking with you."

And so they went on in the same strain, as grand and excellent as ever. But out in the kitchen there was somebody else talking; and that was the Nis, the little gray-jacketed Nis with his red cap — you know him. The Nis sat in the kitchen, playing the pot-watcher. He talked, but nobody heard him except the great black tom-cat, "Cream-thief," as the Dame called him.

The Nis was snarling at her, because she did not believe in his existence, he found: true, she had never seen him; but still, with all her reading, she ought to have known he *did* exist, and have shown him some little attention. She never thought, on Christmas Eve, of setting so much as a spoonful of porridge for him; though all his forefathers had got this, and from dames, too, who had had no reading at all: their porridge used to be swimming with cream and butter. It made the cat's mouth water to hear of it.

"She calls me *an idea!*" said the Nis: "that's quite beyond the reach of my ideas. In fact, she denies me. I've caught her saying so before, and again just now, yonder, where she sits droning to that boy-whipper, that understrapper. I say with Daddy, 'Mind your porridge-pot.' That she doesn't do: so now for making it boil over."

And the Nis puffed at the fire till it burned and blazed. "Hubble — bubble — hish!" the pot boiled over.

"And now for picking holes in Daddy's sock," said the Nis. "I'll unravel a long piece, from toe to heel; so there'll be something to darn when she's not too busy poetizing. Dame poetess, please darn Daddy's stockings."

The Cat sniggered and sneezed; he had caught cold somehow, though he always went in furs.

"I've unlatched the larder-door," said the Nis. "There's clotted cream there as thick as gruel. If you won't have a lick, *I* will."

"If I am to get all the blame and beating," said the Cat, "I'll have my share of the cream."

"A sweet lick is worth a kick!" said the Nis. "But now I'll be off to the Schoolmaster's room, hang his braces on the looking-glass, put his socks in the water-jug, and make him believe that the punch has set his brain spinning. Last night I sat on the woodstack by the kennel. I dearly love to bully the watch-dog; so I swung my legs about in front of him. His chain was so short he could not reach them, however high he sprang: he was furious, and went on bark-barking, and I went on dingle-dangling; that was rare sport! Schoolmaster awoke, and jumped up, and looked out three times; but he couldn't see me, though he *had* got barnacles on; he sleeps in his barnacles."

"Say *mew*, if Dame is coming," said the Cat; "I am hard of hearing: I feel sick to-day."

"You have the licking sickness," said the Nis; "lick away: lick the sickness away. Only be sure to wipe your beard, that the cream mayn't hang on it. Now I'll go for a bit of eavesdropping."

And the Nis stood behind the door, and the door stood ajar. There was no one in the parlor except the Dame and the Under-master. They were talking about things which — as the Schoolmaster finely observed — ought in every household to rank far above pots and pans — the Gifts of the Soul.

"Mr. Kisserup," said the Dame, "I will now show you something in that line, which I have never yet shown to any living creature — least of all to a man — my smaller poems — some of which, however, are rather long. I have called them 'Clinchings by a Gentlewoman.' I cling to those old designations."

"And so one ought," said the Schoolmaster; "one ought to root the German out of our language."

"I do my best toward it," said the Dame. "You will never hear me speak of *Butterdeig* or *Kleiner;* no, I call them *paste-leaves* and *fatty-cakes*."

And she took out of her drawer a writing-book, in a bright-green binding, with two blotches of ink on it.

"There is much in the book that is earnest," said she: "my

mind inclines toward the sorrowful. Here now is my 'Midnight Sigh,' my 'Evening Red,' and here 'When I was wedded to Klemmensen' — my husband, you know; you may pass that over, though it has thought and feeling. 'The Housewife's Duties' is the best piece — sorrowful, like all the rest; I am strongest in that style. Only one single piece is jocular: it contains some lively thoughts — one must indulge in them now and then — thoughts about — don't laugh at me — about being a poetess! It has hitherto been all between me and my drawer; and now you make the third of us, Mr. Kisserup. Poetry is my ruling passion; it haunts and worries me — it reigns over me. This I have expressed in my title 'The Little Nis.' You know the old cottage tales about the Nis, who is always playing pranks in the house. I have depicted myself as the house, and my poetical feelings as the Nis, the spirit that possesses me. His power and strength I have sung in 'The Little Nis;' but you must pledge me with hands and mouth never to reveal my secret, either to my husband or any one else. Read it aloud, so that I may hear whether you understand the composition."

And the Schoolmaster read, and the Dame listened, and so did the little Nis. He was eavesdropping, you know; and he came up just in time to hear the title of "The Little Nis."

"Ho! ho!" said he; "that's my name! what has she been writing about me? O, I'll give her tit for tat; chip her eggs, nip her chickens, hunt the fat off her fatted calf: fie upon such a Dame!"

And he listened with pursed-up lips and pricked-up ears; but as he heard of the Nis's power and glory, and his lordship over the Dame (it was poetry, you know, she meant, but the Nis took the name literally), the little fellow began smiling more and more; his eyes glistened with pleasure; then came lines of dignity in the corners of his mouth; he drew up his heels, and stood on his toes an inch or two higher than usual; he was delighted with what was said about the little Nis.

"I have done her wrong! She is a Dame of soul and high breeding! She has put me into her 'Clinchings,' and they will be printed and read! No more cream for Master Cat: I shall let nobody touch it but myself. One drinks less than

two, so that will be a saving: and *that* I shall carry out, and pay respect and honor to our Dame."

"Ah, he's a man all over, that Nis," said the old Cat. "Only one soft *mew* from the Dame, a *mew* about himself, and he changes his mind in a jiffy! And that Dame of ours, isn't she sly!"

But the Dame was not sly; it was all because the Nis was a man.

If you cannot understand this story, ask somebody to help you; but do not ask the Nis — no, nor yet the Dame.

THE NEIGHBORING FAMILIES.

ANY one might have supposed that something very extraordinary had happened in the duck-pond, there was such a commotion. All the ducks — some swimming, some standing in the pond with their heads downward — suddenly jumped on land, leaving the traces of their feet in the wet clay, and sending forth a loud, startled cry. The water too, which had hitherto been smooth as a mirror, was now troubled. Just before, it had so calmly and clearly reflected everything around, — every tree, every bush, the peasant's cottage with its gable-end full of holes, the swallow's nest beneath, and especially the large rose-tree with its branches and flowers covering the wall, and hanging almost into the water, — all these had been painted on the clear surface and looked like a picture, only with every object reversed, *i e.* upside down ; but now that the water was troubled, colors and forms seemed to run into each other, and the picture was spoiled. Two feathers from the ducks' wings, which had hitherto been calmly wafted hither and thither, now took flight, as though carried away by a gust of wind, and yet not a breath was stirring.

Presently they lay still, and the water also became tranquil and smooth, again reflecting, as before, the peasant's gable-roof, the swallow's nest, and the large rose-tree. Each single Rose beheld itself therein; all were beautiful, but they knew it not, for no one had ever told them so. The sun shone through their delicate petals so full of fragrance, and every Rose felt just as we do when our hearts are full of untold happiness.

"How delightful it is to live here!" said each Rose to herself; "the only thing I can find to wish for is, that I could kiss the sun, because he is so warm and bright. Ah, and then, too, the Roses down in the water! I would kiss them also; they are exactly like us. And I should like to kiss those dear little birds in the nest just below them; there are some others too, above us; they pop out their tiny heads and twitter so prettily; they have no feathers as their father and mother have. Ours are certainly pleasant neighbors, both above and below. O, how charming it is to live here!"

Now the young birds above — those below were but the reflection in the water — were sparrows. Their father and mother were sparrows also; they had taken possession of the empty swallow's nest the year before, and were now perfectly at home in it.

"Are those the ducks' children swimming down there? asked the young Sparrows, as soon as they had spied out the two feathers skimming over the water.

"If you must ask questions, at least let there be some sense in them!" returned the mother. "Don't you see that they are feathers — live clothes, such as I wear, and as you will some day? Only ours are of a finer quality. I wish, however, that we had those feathers up here in the nest, for they would make it warm and comfortable. I should like to know what it was that frightened the ducks just now! it must have been something in the water, for it could not be my calling to you, though I did say 'Twit!' rather loudly. Those thick-headed Roses might have found out what was the matter! but they know nothing and do nothing but look at themselves and scent the air. I am so heartily weary of these neighbors of ours!"

"Listen to the sweet little birds up there!" said the Roses;

"they are actually trying to sing: they cannot yet, but they will in time; how pleasant that must be! It is quite amusing to have such merry neighbors!"

Now came galloping up to the water two horses with a peasant boy upon one of them; the boy had taken off his outer garment, and wore a large broad-brimmed black hat on his head. He whistled as though he too had been a little bird, and rode through the deepest part of the pond. When he came up to the rose-tree he tore off one of the Roses and stuck it in his hat; then fancying himself very smart, off he rode again. The other Roses looked after their lost sister, and asked each other, "Where is she gone?" but that none of them knew.

"I should like to go out into the world," said one of the Roses, "but it is very pleasant here at home in our own green branches. All day long the sun is so warm, and at night-time the sky is still more beautiful; we can then look into those little holes which it is so full of."

By the holes in the sky she meant the stars, for Roses know no better.

"We are the life of the house!" said the mother of the Sparrows, "and people say that a swallow's nest brings luck, so they are glad enough to have us. But as to our neighbors, such a great rose-bush as that by the wall only makes the place damp; I think it will be rooted up soon, and then, perhaps, corn may grow there. Roses are good for nothing but for people to look at and smell, or, at most, to stick in their hats. And this I have heard from my mother: every year they fall to pieces; the peasant's wife collects them and strews salt over them; then a French name is given to them, which I cannot pronounce, nor care to do so, and afterwards they are thrown into the fire to perfume the room. Such is their life; they live only to please the eyes and nose. Now you know all about them!"

As the evening advanced, and the gnats were dancing merrily in the warm atmosphere, and the clouds above looking so red and bright, the Nightingale came and sang to the Roses. He sang that beauty was like sunshine in the world, and that the beautiful shall live forever. But the Roses believed that

the Nightingale was singing about himself, which, indeed, might have been true. As to the song being addressed to them, of that they would never have thought; still they were pleased with it, and wondered whether all the young Sparrows would not become nightingales also in due time.

"I understand quite well what that bird was singing about," said one of the young Sparrows; "there was only one word that was not clear to me; what does he mean by 'the beautiful?'"

"It is nothing," said the mother-bird; "it is only an appearance. At the Hall, where the doves have a house of their own, and pease and grains of corn are strewn for them every day — I have dined with them, and so shall you some time or other: tell me who are thy companions, and I will tell thee who thou art — at the Hall, as I said before, there are two birds with green necks and a tuft on their heads; they can spread out the tail as though it were a large wheel, and it has so many colors that one's eyes are dazzled by looking at it; that is 'the beautiful.' The birds are called peacocks; they should just be stripped of their feathers, and then they would not look different from us and everybody else. I would have plucked them myself, had they not been so large."

"Never mind; I will pluck them, depend upon it!" said the youngest of the Sparrows, who had not yet a single feather of his own.

In the cottage dwelt two young married people; they were cheerful and industrious, and loved each other, so everything went on pleasantly with them. On Sunday morning the young woman went out, gathered a handful of the loveliest among the roses, put them in a glass of water, and placed the glass upon the chest.

"Now I can see that it is Sunday,' said the husband. He kissed his fair young wife, and they sat down, hand in hand, and read a Psalm, while the sun shone brightly through the windows upon the fresh roses and the happy young couple.

"I am weary of looking at this," said the mother of the Sparrows, as she peeped from her nest into the room; and away she flew.

Every Sunday fresh roses were gathered to adorn the room,

and yet the rose-tree blossomed none the less. The young Sparrows at last had feathers of their own, and wanted to fly away with their mother. But this she would not allow; so they were obliged to remain in the nest. And well it was for them that they did; for one day, not looking where she was going, she flew right into a net made of horse-hair, which some boys had fastened to a bough. The net pressed so closely round her leg that it was almost ready to break. O what pain, what terror she suffered! The boys sprang forward to secure their prey; their grasp was cruelly hard. "It is nothing but a sparrow!" said they. But they would not let her fly again; they took her home, and, every time she cried out, they struck her on the beak.

There was an old man in the yard who used to make soap and sell it made up into balls and pieces for hands and beards — a merry, careless old fellow he was, and a merry, wandering life he led; and when he saw the poor sparrow which the boys had caught, and which they said they did not care about, he said to them, "Suppose we make the ugly bird beautiful!" Mother Sparrow shivered from head to foot on hearing this, and she well might. Out of his box, which was provided with the brightest colors, the old man took a quantity of shining leaf-gold, and, having sent the boys for an egg, he smeared the white of it all over the bird, and then laid upon it the leaf-gold. Thus Mother Sparrow was gilt; but she took no pleasure in her finery — her limbs shook with fear. And the old soap-maker tore off a piece of red cloth from his jacket, cut it and clipped it to look like a cock's comb, and then stuck it on the poor bird's head.

"Now you shall see the gold bird fly," said he, letting Mother Sparrow loose; and away she flew in deadly terror. O how she sparkled in the sunshine! All the Sparrows, even a large full-grown Crow, who at her age ought to have been surprised at nothing, flew back quite startled and shocked at the unwonted sight. But they all soon returned, eager to discover what sort of strange bird this might be.

"Whence, and whither? whence, and whither?" screamed the Crow.

"Wait a bit! wait a bit!" cried the Sparrows. But she

would not wait; in terror and anguish she flew homewards. She was ready to sink down upon the earth; and the crowd of birds, both small and great, increased every moment; some even flew at her to peck her. "Only look! only look!" cried they all.

"Only look! only look!" squeaked out the young ones, as she flew toward the nest. "Surely that is a young peacock, for peacocks are of all manner of colors; they hurt the eyes, mother said. Twit! that is 'the beautiful.'" And then they attacked her with their little beaks, so that she could not possibly get into the nest, and she was so overcome with fright that she could not even say "Twit," far less tell them that she was their mother. And now all the other birds pecked her — not a single feather was left; wounded and bleeding, she sank into the rose-bush.

"Poor creature!" said the Roses; "we will hide thee. Come, rest thy little head upon us."

Once more the suffering bird tried to unfold her wings, then closed them again, and died among her neighbors — the fresh, lovely Roses.

"Twit, twit!" quoth one of the young Sparrows in the nest; "I can't imagine where mother is staying; perhaps this is a trick of hers to teach us to shift for ourselves. She has left us the house for an inheritance; but I should like to know which of us is to have it when we have families."

"Ah, I can tell you that!" said the youngest; "I shall not let you all stay here when I have a mate and children of my own."

"But I shall have more wives and children than you," said another.

"But I am the eldest," cried a third; and then all began to scold, flap their wings, and peck with their beaks, till one after another was thrown out of the nest. There they lay full of anger and spite; they held their heads on one side and winked with their eyes: this was their fashion of sulking.

They could already fly a little, and through practice they improved; and at last, having agreed to separate, they settled a mode of salutation, whereby they might recognize each other if they should chance to meet in the wide world before them.

This was to say "Twit," and scrape the ground three times with the left leg.

The youngest Sparrow, who remained in the nest, made himself as big as he could. He was now a householder. However, his dignity did not last long. One night, red lightning flashed through the window-panes, flames of fire burst forth from under the roof, the dry straw was immediately in a blaze, the house was burnt, and with it the Sparrow and his nest. The young married pair happily escaped.

When the sun rose next morning, and everything seemed refreshed as after a gentle nightly slumber, nothing was found remaining of the cottage, except a few blackened beams attached to the chimney, which stood among the ruins quite its own master. There was a strong smell of burning all around, but the rose-tree flourished still as blooming as ever, and the peaceful water of the pond reflected every single bough and flower just as before.

"How pretty those Roses look blossoming close to the ruined cottage!" exclaimed a passer-by. "It is the most charming little picture imaginable; I must have it!" And he took out of his pocket a little book with blank leaves, for he was an artist, and sketched the blackened, smoking ground, the half-burnt planks, the chimney which seemed to lean on one side more and more every moment, as though about to fall, and, in the foreground, the large, beautiful rose-tree, whose beauty, indeed, had been the cause of the little picture being sketched.

Later in the day, two of the former inmates of the nest hopped by. "Where is the cottage?" said they; "where is the nest? twit, it is all burnt, and our strong little brother is burnt also! that is because he turned us out of the nest. Those Roses have had a narrow escape; there they are still with their cheeks as red as ever; they care not a grain for their neighbors' misfortunes. Well, I shall not speak to them, and this is a horrible place — that is my opinion!" And away they flew.

In the course of the autumn there was one beautiful, sunshiny day, — such a day as one never expects to meet with except in the height of summer. The court-yard in front of the grand flight of steps leading up to the hall-door was swept

unusually dry and clean, and there flitted to and fro a multitude of doves, — some black, some white, some violet-color; their plumage glittered in the sunshine, and the ancient and respectable matrons of the Dove family bustled about with much stateliness, crying out to their children, "Stand in groups! stand in groups!" for this was the best way of showing themselves off to advantage.

"Who are those little gray birds, hopping about amongst us?" asked an old Dove with red and green eyes. "Little gray birds, little gray birds!" repeated she.

"They are Sparrows, respectable creatures; we have always had the credit of being good-natured, so we allow them to pick up a few of our grains. They never talk to us, and they scrape so nicely with their legs!"

They did scrape; three times they scraped with their left legs, and then said "Twit!" and thus they recognized each other; they were, in fact, three Sparrows from the nest in the roof of the burnt cottage.

"Provisions are uncommonly good here!" said the Sparrows. Meanwhile the Doves hopped round, ruffled their plumes, and made their private observations.

"Just look at the Crop-pigeon!" said one Dove to another; "do but look at her, see how she snaps up the pease! She gets too many, she gets the best; coo! coo! look what an ugly, wicked creature she is; coo! coo!" And the Dove's eyes sparkled with malice. "Join the group, join the group, little gray birds! little gray birds! coo! coo! coo!" And then their beaks went to work; and so it will be a hundred years hence.

The Sparrows ate heartily and listened attentively, nay, they even joined the group, but were soon weary, so they left the Doves to themselves, and, after indulging in a few remarks on their late companions, hopped under the garden-fence, and finding the door of the summer-house open, one of them ventured upon the threshold. "Twit," said he; "see what I dare to do!" "Twit," said another; "I will do more!" whereupon he hopped into the room. Nobody was there, and the third Sparrow perceiving this, flew boldly in, crying out, "Either do a thing thoroughly, or not at all! What a ridiculous human nest this is! And how is this? what do I see?"

Plainly set before the eyes of every Sparrow were their old neighbors the Roses; they mirrored themselves in the water, and the blackened beams of the cottage rested slantingly upon the falling chimney. Well might the Sparrows exclaim, "How is this? how came all this in the apartments of the great?" And they all tried to fly over the chimney, but their wings were repulsed by a flat wall, for the whole scene was in reality a large splendid picture which the artist had made from his little sketch.

"Twit," said the Sparrows, "it is nothing at all, it is only an appearance; twit, that is 'the beautiful!' can you understand it, for I can't?" And they flew away, for people came into the room.

Days passed, years passed, many times had the Doves cooed and wooed; nay, they quarreled too, malicious birds that they were! The Sparrows lived luxuriously in summer, and were half-frozen in winter; most of them were either betrothed or married; they had young ones, and each, of course, thought his own the handsomest and cleverest of all the Sparrows in the world; they flew hither and hither, and when they chanced to meet they greeted each other with a "Twit!" and three scrapes of the left leg. The eldest of them was now much advanced in years; she had lived a single life, she had neither nest nor young ones, and wishing once more to visit a large town, she one day flew to Copenhagen.

Here she saw a large handsome house standing close by the palace and the canal, wherein lay vessels heavily laden with fruits and wine. The windows of the house were wider below than above, and, on peeping through, every apartment appeared to Miss Sparrow's eyes like a tulip, so rich and varied were the hues that adorned the walls. In the midst of all these gay apartments stood a number of white figures, some of marble, some only of plaster, but, marble or plaster, it was all the same to Miss Sparrow. On the roof of the house was a metal car, with metal horses, and the Goddess of Victory, likewise of metal, guiding them. It was Thorwaldsen's Museum.

"How it shines! how it shines!" quoth the ancient Sparrow maiden; "why, this must be 'the beautiful.' Twit! it is much larger than a peacock!" for she still remembered what

her mother told her formerly about the largest specimen of the beautiful known to her.

And she flew down into the court; this also was splendid: palm-branches and fresh green foliage were painted on the walls, and in the centre was a large rose-tree in full blossom, its fresh, green branches, laden with flowers, drooping over a grave — one solitary grave.

She flew to the spot, for many other Sparrows were there; "Twit!" said she, and scraped the ground three times with her left leg. This greeting she had practiced again and again that year, and no one had understood it, for friends once parted do not meet every day; the salute had become a mere matter of form: but now, to her suprise, two old Sparrows and one young one said "Twit!" in return, and likewise scraped with their left legs.

"Ah, good morning, good morning!" Here had met together no less than three of the old Sparrows from the swallow's nest in the cottage-roof, and one of their descendants. "To think that we should all meet here!" said they. "This is a very fine place, but there is not much to eat; it is 'the beautiful,' you know! Twit!"

Several persons now came into the court from one of the rooms where stood the marble figures, and they went up to the grave which held the remains of the great master whose skill had formed them.

All stood with glistening eyes round Thorwaldsen's grave, and some picked up the scattered rose-leaves to carry home with them. There were travellers from distant lands; from mighty England, from Germany, and from France; and the fairest lady in the company plucked one of the roses, and wore it near her heart. This made the Sparrows believe that the Roses reigned here, and that this magnificent mansion had been built for them alone; it seemed to them rather too much honor; nevertheless, as mankind was evidently so intent upon showing respect to the Roses, they determined to do the same. "Twit!" said they; and swept the ground with their tails, winking with one eye upon the Roses the while. Long did they look at them before they could quite make up their minds whether these Roses were or were not their old neigh

bors: yes, such most assuredly they were; the artist who had sketched the rose-bush growing near the blackened remains of the cottage had afterwards gained permission to transplant it, and had then given it to the architect of the Museum. Nowhere could roses be found more lovely or more fragrant than those borne by this tree, so it was planted close by Thorwaldsen's grave, and there, a living symbol of the beautiful, it blossomed year after year, and gave its bright-hued, delicate leaves to be carried away as remembrances to foreign lands.

"So you have got an establishment in this town!" said the Sparrows. And the Roses nodded assent; they had recognized their neighbors and were very glad to see them.

"How delightful it is to live and blossom here! to see old neighbors. Ah, I remember the time when they lived by the duck-pond; twit, how droll it is that they should attain such a high station. Some folks come to honor while they are sleeping. And what there is so wonderful in a great red rag like that I can't think! Ah, there is a withered leaf, that I can see!"

And they pecked at it till the leaf fell off; but the tree looked all the fresher and greener, and the Roses gave forth their perfume to the sunbeams even after they had fallen on Thorwaldsen's grave, with whose long-enduring name the memory of their fleeting beauty thus became linked.

THE DARNING-NEEDLE.

THERE was once a darning-needle, who thought herself so fine, she imagined she was an embroidering-needle.

"Take care, and mind you hold me tight!" she said to the Fingers that took her out. "Don't let me fall! If I fall on the ground I shall certainly never be found again, for I am so fine!"

"That's as it may be," said the Fingers; and they grasped her round the body.

"See, I'm coming with a train!" said the Darning-needle, and she drew a long thread after her, but there was no knot in the thread.

The Fingers pointed the needle just at the cook's slipper, in which the upper leather had burst, and was to be sewn together.

"That's vulgar work," said the Darning-needle. "I shall never get through. I'm breaking! I'm breaking!" And she really broke. "Did I not say so?" said the Darning-needle; "I'm too fine!"

"Now it's quite useless," said the Fingers; but they were

obliged to hold her fast, all the same; for the cook dropped some sealing-wax upon the needle, and pinned her handkerchief together with it in front.

"So, now I'm a breast-pin!" said the Darning-Needle. "I knew very well that I should come to honor: when one is something, one comes to something!"

And she laughed quietly to herself — and one can never see when a darning-needle laughs. There she sat, as proud as if she was in a state coach, and looked all about her.

"May I be permitted to ask if you are of gold?" she inquired of the pin, her neighbor. "You have a very pretty appearance, and a peculiar head, but it is only little. You must take pains to grow, for it's not every one that has sealing-wax dropped upon him."

And the Darning-needle drew herself up so proudly that she fell out of the handkerchief right into the sink, which the cook was rinsing out.

"Now we're going on a journey," said the Darning-needle. "If I only don't get lost!"

But she really was lost.

"I'm too fine for this world," she observed, as she lay in the gutter. "But I know who I am, and there's always something in that!"

So the Darning-needle kept her proud behavior, and did not lose her good humor. And things of many kinds swam over her, chips and straws and pieces of old newspapers.

"Only look how they sail!" said the Darning-needle. "They don't know what is under them! I'm here, I remain firmly here. See, there goes a chip thinking of nothing in the world but of himself — of a chip! There's a straw going by now. How he turns! how he twirls about! Don't think only of yourself, you might easily run up against a stone. There swims a bit of newspaper. What's written upon it has long been forgotten, and yet it gives itself airs. I sit quietly and patiently here. I know who I am, and I shall remain what I am."

One day something lay close beside her that glittered splendidly; then the Darning-needle believed that it was a diamond; but it was a bit of broken bottle; and because it

shone, the Darning-needle spoke to it, introducing herself as a breast-pin.

"I suppose you are a diamond?" she observed.

"Why, yes, something of that kind."

And then each believed the other to be a very valuable thing; and they began speaking about the world, and how very conceited it was.

"I have been in a lady's box," said the Darning-needle, "and this lady was a cook. She had five fingers on each hand, and I never saw anything so conceited as those five fingers. And yet they were only there that they might take me out of the box and put me back into it."

"Were they of good birth?" asked the Bit of Bottle.

"No, indeed" replied the Darning-needle, "but very haughty. There were five brothers, all of the finger family. They kept very proudly together, though they were of different lengths: the outermost, the thumbling, was short and fat; he walked out in front of the ranks, and only had one joint in his back, and could only make a single bow; but he said that if he were hacked off a man, that man was useless for service in war. Daintymouth, the second finger, thrust himself into sweet and sour, pointed to sun and moon, and gave the impression when they wrote. Longman, the third, looked at all the others over his shoulder. Goldborder, the fourth, went about with a golden belt round his waist; and little Playman did nothing at all, and was proud of it. There was nothing but bragging among them, and therefore I went away."

"And now we sit here and glitter!" said the Bit of Bottle.

At that moment more water came into the gutter, so that it overflowed, and the Bit of Bottle was carried away.

"So he is disposed of," observed the Darning-needle. "I remain here, I am too fine. But that's my pride, and my pride is honorable." And proudly she sat there, and had many great thoughts. "I could almost believe I had been born of a sunbeam, I'm so fine! It really appears as if the sunbeams were always seeking for me under the water. Ah! I'm so fine that my mother cannot find me. If I had my old eye, which broke off, I think I should cry; but, no, I should not do that: it's not genteel to cry."

One day a couple of street boys lay grubbing in the gutter, where they sometimes found old nails, farthings, and similar treasures. It was dirty work, but they took great delight in it.

"O!" cried one, who had pricked himself with the Darning-needle, "there's a fellow for you!"

"I'm not a fellow; I'm a young lady!" said the Darning-needle.

But nobody listened to her. The sealing-wax had come off, and she had turned black; but black makes one look slender, and she thought herself finer even than before.

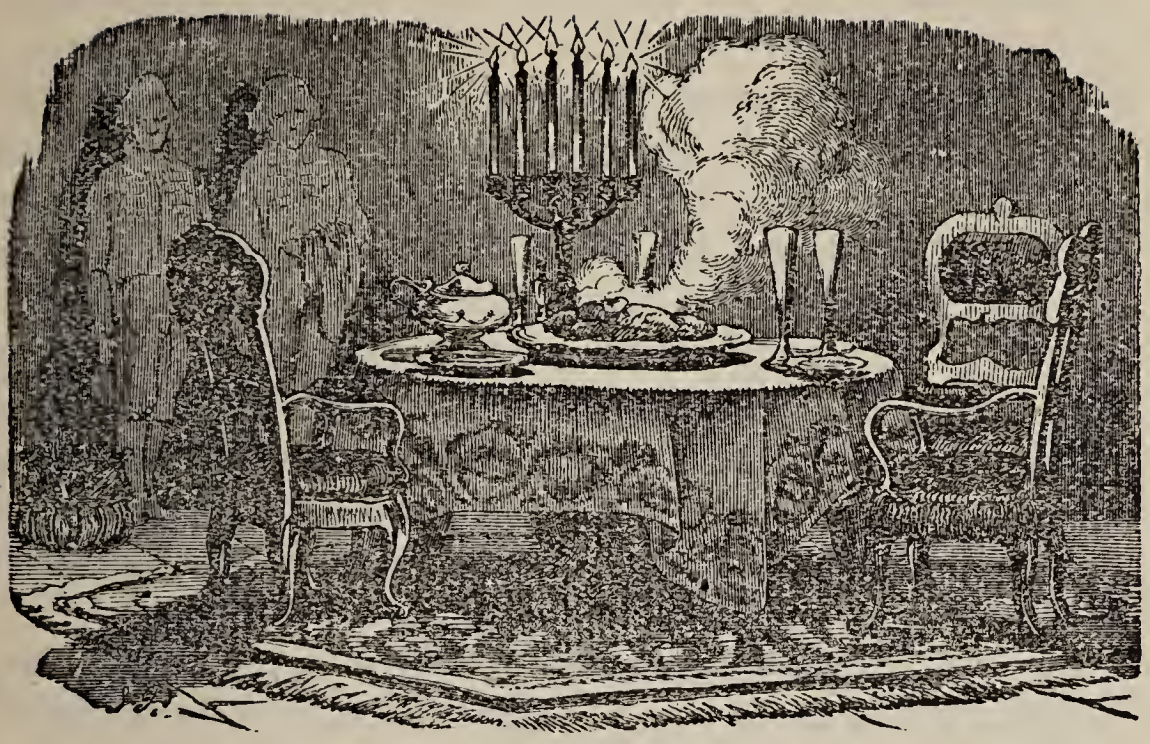
"Here comes an egg-shell sailing along!" said the boys; and they stuck the Darning-needle fast in the egg-shell.

"White walls, and black myself! that looks well," remarked the Darning-needle. "Now one can see me. I only hope I shall not be seasick!" But she was not seasick at all. "It is good against seasickness, if one has a steel stomach, and does not forget that one is a little more than an ordinary person! Now my seasickness is over. The finer one is, the more one can bear."

"Crack!" went the egg-shell, for a wagon went over her.

"Good heavens, how it crushes one!" said the Darning-needle. "I'm getting seasick now, — I'm quite sick."

But she was not really sick, though the wagon went over her; she lay there at full length, and there she may lie.



THE HAPPY FAMILY.

THE biggest leaf here in the country is certainly the burdock leaf. Put one in front of your waist and it's just like an apron, and if you lay it upon your head it is almost as good as an umbrella, for it is quite remarkably large. A burdock never grows alone ; where there is one tree there are several more. It's splendid to behold ! and all this splendor is snails' meat, — the great white snails, which the grand people in old times used to have made into fricassees ; and when they had eaten them they would say, " H'm, how good that is ! " for they had the idea that it tasted delicious. These snails lived on burdock leaves, and that's why burdocks were sown.

Now there was an old estate, on which people ate snails no longer. The snails had died out, but the burdocks had not. These latter grew and grew in all the walks and on all the beds — there was no stopping them : the place became a complete forest of burdocks. Here and there stood an apple or plum tree ; but for this, nobody would have thought a garden had been there. Everything was burdock, and among the burdocks lived the two last ancient snails.

They did not know themselves how old they were, but they could very well remember that there had been a great many

more of them; that they had descended from a foreign family, and that the whole forest had been planted for them and theirs. They had never been away from home, but it was known to them that something existed in the world called the manor-house, and that there one was boiled, and one became black, and was laid upon a silver dish; but what was done afterward they did not know. Moreover, they could not imagine what that might be, being boiled and laid upon a silver dish; but it was stated to be fine, and particularly grand! Neither the cockchafer, nor the toad, nor the earth-worm, whom they questioned about it, could give them any information, for none of their own kind had ever been boiled and laid on silver dishes.

The old white snails were the grandest in the world; they knew that! The forest was there for their sake, and the manor-house too, so that they might be boiled and laid on silver dishes.

They led a very retired and happy life, and as they themselves were childless, they had adopted a little common snail, which they brought up as their own child. But the little thing would not grow, for it was only a common snail, though the old people, and particularly the mother, declared one could easily see how he grew. And when the father could not see it, she requested him to feel the little snail's shell, and he felt it, and acknowledged that she was right.

One day it rained very hard.

"Listen, how it's drumming on the burdock leaves, rum-dum-dum! rum-dum-dum!" said the Father Snail.

"That's what I call drops," said the mother. "It's coming straight down the stalks. You'll see it will be wet here directly. I'm only glad that we have our good houses, and that the little one has his own. There has been more done for us than for any other creature; one can see very plainly that we are the grand folks of the world! We have houses from our birth, and the burdock forest has been planted for us: I should like to know how far it extends, and what lies beyond it."

"There's nothing," said the Father Snail, "that can be better than here at home; I have nothing at all to wish for."

"Yes," said the mother, "I should like to be taken to the manor-house and boiled and laid upon a silver dish; that has been done to all our ancestors, and you may be sure it's quite a distinguished honor."

"The manor-house has perhaps fallen in," said the Father Snail, "or the forest of burdocks may have grown over it, so that the people can't get out at all. You need not be in a hurry — but you always hurry so, and the little one is beginning just the same way. Has he not been creeping up that stalk these three days? My head quite aches when I look up at him."

"You must not scold him," said the Mother Snail. "He crawls very deliberately. We shall have much joy in him; and we old people have nothing else to live for. But have you ever thought where we shall get a wife for him? Don't you think that farther in the wood there may be some more of our kind?"

"There may be black snails there, I think," said the old man, — "black snails without houses! but they're too vulgar. And they're conceited, for all that. But we can give the commission to the ants: they run to and fro, as if they had business; they're sure to know of a wife for our young gentleman."

"I certainly know the most beautiful of brides," said one of the Ants; "but I fear she would not do, for she is the Queen!"

"That does not matter," said the two old Snails. "Has she a house?"

"She has a castle!" replied the Ant, — "the most beautiful ant's castle, with seven hundred passages."

"Thank you," said the Mother Snail; "our boy shall not go into an ant-hill. If you know of nothing better, we'll give the commission to the white gnats; they fly far about in rain and sunshine, and they know the burdock wood, inside and outside."

"We have a wife for him," said the Gnats. "A hundred man-steps from here a little snail with a house is sitting on a gooseberry-bush; she is quite alone, and old enough to marry. It's only a hundred man-steps from here."

"Yes, let her come to him," said the old people. "He has a whole burdock forest, and she has only a bush."

And so they brought the little maiden snail. Eight days passed before she arrived, but that was the rare circumstance about it, for by this one could see that she was of the right kind.

And then they had a wedding, Six glow-worms lighted as well as they could: with this exception it went very quietly, for the old snail people could not bear feasting and dissipation. But a capital speech was made by the Mother Snail. The father could not speak, he was so much moved. Then they gave the young couple the whole burdock forest for an inheritance, and said, what they had always said, namely, — that it was the best place in the world, and that the young people, if they lived honorably, and increased and multiplied, would some day be taken with their children to the manor-house, and boiled black, and laid upon a silver dish. And when the speech was finished, the old people crept into their houses and never came out again, for they slept.

The young snail pair now ruled in the forest, and had a numerous progeny. But as the young ones were never boiled and put into silver dishes, they concluded that the manor-house had fallen in, and that all the people in the world had died out. And as nobody contradicted them, they must have been right. And the rain fell down upon the burdock leaves to play the drum for them; and the sun shone to color the burdock forest for them; and they were happy, very happy — the whole family was happy, uncommonly happy!

THE SUMMER-GOWK.[1]

DEEP lay the snow, for it was winter time, the air was cold, the wind sharp: but within doors all was snug and warm. And within doors lay the flower; in its bulb it lay, under earth and snow.

One day there fell rain; the drops trickled through the snow coverlet, down into the earth, and stirred against the flower-bulb, telling of the world of light above. And presently a sunbeam, pointed and slender, came piercing its way to the bulb, and tapped on it.

"Come in," said the Flower.

"That I can't," said the Sunbeam: "I am not strong enough to lift the latch. I shall be strong in summer."

"When will it be summer?" asked the Flower; and it asked this again, whenever a sunbeam pierced down to it. But summer was still far away: the ground was covered with snow, and every night there was ice on the water.

"How long it is! how long it is!" said the Flower. "I feel quite cribbed and cramped. I *must* stretch myself: I *must* raise myself: I *must* lift the latch and look out, and nod good-morrow to the summer; and that will be a merry time!"

And the Flower rose and strained from within, against the thin shell that had been softened by the rain, warmed by the earth and snow, and tapped upon by the sunbeam. It shot up from under the snow, with a pale-green bud on its tender stalk, and narrow thick leaves, that curled around it for a screen. The snow was cold, but glittering with light, and easy enough to push through: and here came the sunbeams with greater strength than before.

[1] *Sommergjæk* (meaning *summer-dupe*) is a Danish name for the snow-drop. Among ourselves, *gowk* and *gawky* (like *Gauch* in German) are common provincial terms for a cuckoo, or for a fool. "In the north of England," says Brand (in his *Popular Antiquities*), "April fools are called 'April Gouks.'" The form *geck* (also used in Germany) was to be found here in the time of Shakespeare. Malvolio, for instance, complains that he has been "made the most notorious *geck* and gull, that e'er invention played on." *Twelfth Night*, Act v. Sc. 1.

"Welcome! welcome!" sang every Sunbeam: and the Flower raised itself above the snow, up into the world of light. The sunbeams kissed and caressed it, till it fully unfolded itself, white as snow, and decked with green stripes. It bowed its head in gladness and humility.

"Beautiful flower!" sang the Sunbeams. "How fresh thou art, and pure! Thou art the first one: thou art the only one! Thou art our darling! Thou art like a bell ringing up the summer, lovely summer, over towns and fields. All snow shall melt: the cold winds be chased away: we shall reign, and all things will grow green. Then thou wilt have fellowship, the lilacs and laburnums, and last of all the roses. But thou art the first, so tender and so pure!"

This was a deep delight to the Flower. It seemed as if the air it breathed was music, and as if its leaves and stem were full of thrilling sunbeams. There it stood, so fine and fragile, and yet so vigorous, in the beauty of youth: stood in its white kirtle with green bands, and praised the summer. But summer was not yet come; clouds began to hide the sun: sharp winds blew down upon the flower.

"Thou art a little too soon," said Wind and Weather. "We still hold sway: this thou shalt feel to thy cost! Why not have kept in-doors, instead of running out here in thy finery? it is not time for that yet!"

It was biting cold. The days came, and never brought a sunbeam. It was weather to freeze it to pieces, such a delicate little flower! But there was more strength in it than it knew of. It was strong in its glad faith in the summer, that must be near; for thus its own heart had foretold it, and the sunbeams had confirmed the tale. And so with patient hope it stood in its white dress, in the white snow, bowing its head when the flakes fell thick and heavy, and when icy blasts came driving over it.

"Crouch, cringe!" they howled. "Wither and starve! What doest thou here in the cold? Thou hast been lured abroad; the sunbeam hath mocked thee. Now make the best of it, thou summer-gowk!"

"Summer-gowk!" echoed the keen airs of morning.

"A summer-gowk!" shouted children, who came down into

the garden; "there it stands so pretty, so beautiful: the first, the only one!"

And the words did good to the Flower; they were like warm sunbeams. In its gladness it never once noticed that it was being plucked. It lay in a child's hand, was kissed by a child's mouth, brought into a warm room, gazed at by kind eyes, and set in water — so strengthening, so enlivening. The Flower thought it had passed into the middle of summer.

The daughter of the house was a pretty little lass, just confirmed, and she had a little sweetheart, also just confirmed, who was studying for his livelihood. "He shall be my summer-gowk," said she; and took the fine flower, and laid it in a scented paper, that was written all over with verses about the flower, beginning with *summer-gowk*, and ending with *summer-gowk* — "now, sweetheart, be my winter-fool!" — she had mocked him with the summer. Yes, that was the meaning of the verses. They were folded up as a letter, and the Flower was slipped inside, and there it lay all in the dark, as dark as when it lay in the bulb. It had to go on a journey, squeezed into the corner of a post-bag; this was not at all pleasant, but it came to an end at last.

The journey was over, the letter was opened, and read by the young sweetheart. He was so delighted, he kissed the Flower. It was locked up, with the verses around it, in a drawer, where there were many charming letters, but without a single flower in them. Here again it was the first, the only one, as the sunbeams had called it, and that was something to think about.

It was left to think at leisure for a long time; and it went on thinking throughout the summer, and throughout the winter, till another summer came round: then it was drawn forth again. But this time the youth looked by no means delighted. He gripped hold of the papers, and flung away the verses, so that the Flower dropped out on the floor. Flattened and withered as it was, still it ought not to have been thrown down on the floor; yet, after all, it was better off there than in the fire, where the verses and letters were blazing. What could have happened? What happens so often. The flower had mocked him; that was a joke: the maiden had mocked him; that was

no joke: she had chosen another sweetheart for this midsummer.

The next morning the sun shone in on the little flattened Summer-gowk, that looked as if it was painted on the floor. The servant girl, who was sweeping, picked it up and placed it in one of the books on the table; for she fancied it must have fallen while she was routing about and putting things in order. And again the Flower lay between verses — printed verses, and those are grander than written ones; at all events they cost more.

Years passed away, and the book stood still on its shelf. At length it was taken down, opened, and read. It was a good book: songs and poems by the Danish poet, Ambrosius Stub, who is well worth knowing. The man who was reading turned a page of the book. "So here is a flower!" said he; "a summer-gowk! Not without meaning does it lie here. Poor Ambrosius Stub; he too was a summer-gowk, a poet-gowk. He came before his time; and so he had to face sharp winds and sleet, on his rounds among the gentlemen of Fünen. Set up for a show, like the Flower in a glass; sent on for a jest, like the flower in a valentine; he was a summer-gowk, a winter-fool, all fun and foolery; and yet the first, the only Danish poet of the time; and still, in his youthful freshness, the first, the only one! Aye, lie as a mark in this book, little Summer-gowk: thou art laid here with some meaning."

And thus the Summer-gowk was put back again into the book, and felt honored and delighted with learning that it was a mark in a beautiful song-book; and that he who had first written and sung about the Flower had himself been a summer-gowk, and played the fool in winter. Now the Flower understood this in its own way, just as we understand anything in our way.

This is the fairy-tale of the *Summer-gowk*.

THE OLD HOUSE.

UP there in the street was an old, old house; it was almost three hundred years old, for that might be known by reading the great beam on which the date of the year was carved: together with tulips and hop-binds there were whole verses spelled as in former times, and over every window was a distorted face cut out in the beam. The one story stood forward a great way over the other; and directly under the eaves was a leaden spout with a dragon's head: the rain-water should have run out of the mouth, but it ran out of the belly, for there was a hole in the spout.

All the other houses in the street were so new and so neat, with large window-panes and smooth walls, one could easily see that they would have nothing to do with the old house: they certainly thought, "How long is that old decayed thing to stand here as a spectacle in the street? And then the projecting windows stand so far out, that no one can see from our windows what happens in that direction! The steps are as

broad as those of a palace, and as high as to a church tower. The iron railings look just like the door to an old family vault, and then they have brass tops, — that's so stupid ! "

On the other side of the street were also new and neat houses, and they thought just as the others did ; but at the window opposite the old house there sat a little boy with fresh, rosy cheeks and bright, beaming eyes : he certainly liked the old house best, and that both in sunshine and moonshine. And when he looked across at the wall where the mortar had fallen out, he could sit and find out there the strangest figures imaginable ; exactly as the street had appeared before, with steps, projecting windows, and pointed gables ; he could see soldiers with halberds, and spouts where the water ran, like dragons and serpents. *That* was a house to look at ; and there lived an old man, who wore plush breeches ; and he had a coat with large brass buttons, and a wig that one could see was a real wig. Every morning there came an old fellow to him who put his rooms in order, and went on errands ; otherwise, the old man in the plush breeches was quite alone in the old house. Now and then he came to the window and looked out, and the little boy nodded to him, and the old man nodded again, and so they became acquaintances, and then they were friends, although they had never spoken to each other, — but that made no difference. The little boy heard his parents say, " The old man opposite is very well off, but he is so very, very lonely ! "

The Sunday following, the Little Boy took something, and wrapped it up in a piece of paper, went down-stairs, and stood in the doorway ; and when the man who went on errands came past, he said to him, —

" I say, master ! will you give this to the old man over the way for me ? I have two pewter soldiers — this is one of them, and he shall have it, for I know he is so very, very lonely."

And the old errand man looked quite pleased, nodded, and took the pewter soldier over to the old house. Afterwards there came a message ; it was to ask if the Little Boy himself had not a wish to come over and pay a visit ; and so he got permission of his parents, and then went over to the old house.

And the brass balls on the iron railings shone much brighter than ever; one would have thought they were polished on account of the visit; and it was as if the carved-out trumpeters — for there were trumpeters, who stood in tulips, carved out on the door — blew with all their might, their cheeks appeared so much rounder than before. Yes, they blew — "Trateratra! the Little Boy comes! trateratra!" — and then the door opened.

The whole passage was hung with portraits of knights in armor and ladies in silken gowns; and the armor rattled, and the silken gowns rustled! And then there was a flight of stairs which went a good way upward, and a little way downward, and then one came on a balcony which was in a very dilapidated state, sure enough, with large holes and long crevices; but grass grew there and leaves out of them altogether, for the whole balcony outside, the yard, and the walls, were overgrown with so much green stuff, that it looked like a garden: but it was only a balcony Here stood old flower-pots with faces and asses' ears, and the flowers grew just as they liked. One of the pots was quite overrun on all sides with pinks, that is to say, with the green part; shoot stood by shoot, and it said quite distinctly, "The air has cherished me, the sun has kissed me, and promised me a little flower on Sunday! — a little flower on Sunday!"

And then they entered a chamber where the walls were covered with hog's leather, and printed with gold flowers.

"Gilding 's soon past,
But pig-skin will last,"

said the walls.

And there stood easy-chairs, with such high backs, and so carved out, and with arms on both sides. "Sit down! sit down!" said they. "Ugh! how I creak; now I shall certainly get the gout, like the old clothes-press: ugh!"

And then the Little Boy came into the room where the projecting windows were, and where the old man sat.

"I thank you for the pewter soldier, my little friend!" said the Old Man, "and I thank you because you come over to me."

"Thankee! thankee!" or "Cranky! cranky!" sounded from all the furniture; there was so much of it, that each

article stood in the other's way, to get a look at the Little Boy.

In the middle of the wall hung a picture representing a beautiful lady, so young, so glad, but dressed quite as in former times, with clothes that stood quite stiff, and with powder in her hair; she neither said "thankee, Thankee!" nor "Cranky, cranky!" but looked with her mild eyes at the Little Boy, who directly asked the Old Man, "Where did you get her?"

"Yonder, at the broker's," said the Old Man, "where there are so many pictures hanging. No one knows or cares about them, for they are all of them buried; but I knew her in bygone days, and now she has been dead and gone these fifty years!"

Under the picture, in a glazed frame, there hung a *bouquet* of withered flowers; they were almost fifty years old; they looked so very old!

The pendulum of the great clock went to and fro, and the hands turned, and everything in the room became still older; but they did not observe it.

"They say at home," said the Little Boy, "that you are so very, very lonely!"

"O!" said he, "the old thoughts, with what they may bring with them, come and visit me, and now you also come! I am very well off."

Then he took a book with pictures in it down from the shelf; there were whole long processions and pageants, with the strangest characters, which one never sees nowadays: soldiers like the knave of clubs, and citizens with waving flags; the tailors had theirs, with a pair of shears held by two lions; and the shoemakers theirs, without boots, but with an eagle that had two heads, for the shoemakers must have everything so that they can say, it is a pair! Yes, that was a picture-book!

The Old Man now went into the other room to fetch preserves, apples, and nuts; yes, it was delightful over there in the old house.

"I cannot bear it any longer!" said the Pewter Soldier, who sat on the drawers; "it is so lonely and melancholy here! but when one has been in a family circle one cannot accustom

oneself to this life! I cannot bear it any longer! the whole day is so long, and the evenings are still longer! Here it is not at all as it is over the way at your home, where your father and mother spoke so pleasantly, and where you and all you sweet children made such a delightful noise. Nay, how lonely the old man is! Do you think that he gets kisses? do you think he gets mild eyes, or a Christmas tree? He will get nothing but a grave — I can bear it no longer!"

"You must not let it grieve you so much," said the Little Boy; "I find it so very delightful here, and then all the old thoughts, with what they may bring with them, they come and visit here."

"Yes, it's all very well, but I see nothing of them, and I don't know them!" said the Pewter Soldier; "I cannot bear it!"

"But you must!" said the Little Boy.

Then in came the Old Man with the most pleased and happy face, the most delicious preserves, apples, and nuts, and so the Little Boy thought no more about the Pewter Soldier.

The Little Boy returned home happy and pleased, and weeks and days passed away, and nods were made to the old house, and from the old house, and then the Little Boy went over there again.

The carved trumpeters blew, "Trateratra! there is the Little Boy! trateratra!" and the swords and armor on the knights' portraits rattled, and the silk gowns rustled; the hog's-leather spoke, and the old chairs had the gout in their legs and rheumatism in their backs; Ugh! — it was exactly like the first time, for over there one day and hour was just like another.

"I cannot bear it!" said the Pewter Soldier; "I have shed pewter tears! it is too melancholy! rather let me go to the wars and lose arms and legs! it would at least be a change. I cannot bear it longer! Now I know what it is to have a visit from one's old thoughts, with what they may bring with them! I have had a visit from mine, and you may be sure it is no pleasant thing in the end; I was at last about to jump down from the drawers.

"I saw you all over there at home so distinctly, as if you

really were here; it was again that Sunday morning; all you children stood before the table and sung your Psalms, as you do every morning. You stood devoutly with folded hands; and father and mother were just as pious; and then the door was opened, and little Sister Mary, who is not two years old yet, and who always dances when she hears music or singing, of whatever kind it may be, was put into the room — though she ought not to have been there — and then she began to dance, but could not keep time, because the tones were so long; and then she stood, first on the one leg, and bent her head forward, and then on the other leg, and bent her head forward — but all would not do. You stood very seriously all together, although it was difficult enough; but I laughed to myself, and then I fell off the table, and got a bump, which I have still — for it was not right of me to laugh. But the whole now passes before me again in thought, and everything that I have lived to see; and these are the old thoughts, with what they may bring with them!

"Tell me if you still sing on Sundays? Tell me something about little Mary! and how my comrade, the other pewter soldier, lives! Yes, he is happy enough, that's sure! I cannot bear it any longer!"

"You are given away as a present!" said the Little Boy; "you must remain. Can you not understand that?"

The Old Man now came with a drawer, in which there was much to be seen, both "tin boxes" and "balsam boxes," old cards, so large and so gilded, such as one never sees them now. And several drawers were opened, and the piano was opened; it had landscapes on the inside of the lid, and it was so hoarse when the Old Man played on it! and then he hummed a song.

"Yes, she could sing that!" said he, and nodded to the portrait, which he had bought at the broker's, and the Old Man's eyes shone so bright!

"I will go to the wars! I will go to the wars!" shouted the Pewter Soldier as loud as he could, and threw himself off the drawers right down on the floor.

What became of him? The Old Man sought, and the Little Boy sought; he was away, and he stayed away.

"I shall find him!" said the Old Man; but he never found him. The floor was too open — the Pewter Soldier had fallen through a crevice, and there he lay as in an open tomb.

That day passed, and the Little Boy went home, and that week passed, and several weeks too. The windows were quite frozen, the little boy was obliged to sit and breathe on them to get a peep-hole over to the old house, and there the snow had been blown into all the carved work and inscriptions; it lay quite up over the steps, just as if there was no one at home; — nor was there any one at home — the Old Man was dead!

In the evening there was a hearse seen before the door, and he was borne into it in his coffin: he was now to go out into the country, to lie in his grave. He was driven out there, but no one followed; all his friends were dead, and the Little Boy kissed his hand to the coffin as it was driven away.

Some days afterwards there was an auction at the old house, and the Little Boy saw from his window how they carried the old knights and the old ladies away, the flower-pots with the long ears, the old chairs, and the old clothes-presses. Something came here, and something came there; the portrait of her who had been found at the broker's came to the broker's again; and there it hung, for no one knew her more — no one cared about the old picture.

In the spring they pulled the house down, for, as people said, it was a ruin. One could see from the street right into the room with the hog's-leather hanging, which was slashed and torn; and the green grass and leaves about the balcony hung quite wild about the falling beams. And then it was put to rights.

"That was a relief!" said the neighboring houses. . . . .

A fine house was built there, with large windows, and smooth, white walls; but before it, where the old house had in fact stood, was a little garden laid out, and a wild grape-vine ran up the wall of the neighboring house. Before the garden there was a large iron railing with an iron door; it looked quite splendid, and people stood still and peeped in, and the sparrows hung by scores in the vine, and chattered away at each other as well as they could, but it was not about the old

house, for they could not remember it, so many years had passed, — so many that the Little Boy had grown up to a whole man, yes, a clever man, and a pleasure to his parents; and he had just been married, and together with his little wife, had come to live in the house here, where the garden was; and he stood by her there whilst she planted a field-flower that she found so pretty; she planted it with her little hand, and pressed the earth around it with her fingers. O! what was that? She had stuck herself. There sat something pointed, straight out of the soft mould.

It was — yes, guess! — it was the Pewter Soldier, he that was lost up at the Old Man's, and had tumbled and turned about amongst the timber and the rubbish, and had at last laid for many years in the ground.

The young wife wiped the dirt off the Soldier, first with a green leaf, and then with her fine handkerchief — it had such a delightful smell, that it was to the Pewter Soldier just as if he had awaked from a trance.

"Let me see him," said the young man. He laughed, and then shook his head. "Nay, it cannot be he: but he reminds me of a story about a pewter soldier which I had when I was a little boy!" And then he told his wife about the old house, and the Old Man, and about the Pewter Soldier that he sent over to him because he was so very, very lonely; and he told it as correctly as it had really been, so that the tears came into the eyes of his young wife, on account of the old house and the Old Man.

"It may possibly be, however, that it is the same pewter soldier!" said she. "I will take care of it, and remember all that you have told me; but you must show me the Old Man's grave!"

"But I do not know it," said he, "and no one knows it! all his friends were dead, no one took care of it, and I was then a little boy!"

"How very, very lonely he must have been!" said she.

"Very, very lonely!" said the Pewter Soldier; "but it is delightful not to be forgotten!"

"Delightful!" shouted something close by; but no one, except the Pewter Soldier, saw that it was a piece of the hog's-

leather hangings ; it had lost all its gilding ; it looked like a piece of wet clay, but it had an opinion, and it gave it :—

"Gilding 's soon past,
But pig-skin will last."

This the Pewter Soldier did not believe.

IN THE DUCK-YARD.

A DUCK arrived from Portugal. Some said she came from Spain, but that's all the same. At any rate she was called the Portuguese, and laid eggs, and was killed and cooked, and that was *her* career. But the ducklings which crept forth from her eggs were afterwards also called Portuguese, and there is something in that. Now, of the whole family, there was only one left in the duck-yard, — a yard to which the chickens had access, likewise, and where the cock strutted about in a very aggressive manner.

"He annoys me with his loud crowing!" observed the Portuguese Duck. "But he's a handsome bird, there's no denying that, though he is not a drake. He ought to moderate his voice, but that's an art inseparable from polite education, like that possessed by the little singing birds over in the lime-trees in the neighbor's garden. How charmingly they sing! There's something quite pretty in their warbling. I call it Portugal. If I had only such a little singing bird, I'd be a mother to him, kind and good, for that's in my blood, — my Portuguese blood!"

And while she was still speaking, a little singing bird came head over heels from the roof into the yard. The cat was behind him, but the bird escaped with a broken wing, and that's how he came tumbling into the yard.

"That's just like the cat; she's a villain!" said the Portuguese Duck. "I remember her ways when I had children of my own. That such a creature should be allowed to live, and to wander about upon the roofs! I don't think they do such things in Portugal!"

And she pitied the little Singing Bird, and the other ducks who were not of Portuguese descent pitied him too.

"Poor little creature!" they said, as one after another came up. "We certainly can't sing," they said, "but we have a sounding board, or something of the kind, within us; we can feel that, though we don't talk of it."

"But I can talk of it," said the Portuguese Duck; "and

I'll do something for the little fellow, for that's my duty!" And she stepped into the water-trough, and beat her wings upon the water so heartily, that the little Singing Bird was almost drowned by the bath he got, but the Duck meant it kindly. "That's a good deed," she said: "the others may take example by it."

"Piep!" said the little Bird: one of his wings was broken, and he found it difficult to shake himself; but he quite understood that the bath was kindly meant. "You are very kind-hearted, madam," he said; but he did not wish for a second bath.

"I have never thought about my heart," continued the Portuguese Duck, "but I know this much, that I love all my fellow-creatures except the cat; but nobody can expect me to love her, for she ate up two of my ducklings. But pray make yourself at home, for one can make oneself comfortable. I myself am from a strange country, as you may see from my bearing and from my feathery dress. My drake is a native of these parts; he's not of my race; but for all that I'm not proud! If any one here in the yard can understand you, I may assert that I am that person."

"She's quite full of Portulak," said a little common Duck, who was witty; and all the other common ducks considered the word *Portulak* quite a good joke, for it sounded like Portugal: and they nudged each other and said "Rapp!" It was too witty! And all the other ducks now began to notice the little Singing Bird.

"The Portuguese has certainly a greater command of language," they said. "For our part, we don't care to fill our beaks with such long words, but our sympathy is just as great. If we don't do anything for you, we march about with you everywhere; and we think that the best thing we can do."

"You have a lovely voice," said one of the oldest. "It must be a great satisfaction to be able to give so much pleasure as you are able to impart. I certainly am no great judge of your song, and consequently I keep my beak shut; and even that is better than talking nonsense to you as others do."

"Don't plague him so," interposed the Portuguese Duck: "he requires rest and nursing. My little Singing Bird, do you wish me to prepare another bath for you?"

"O no! pray let me be dry!" was the little Bird's petition.

"The water cure is the only remedy for me when I am unwell," quoth the Portuguese. "Amusement is beneficial too. The neighboring fowls will soon come to pay their visit. There are two Cochin Chinese among them. They wear feathers on their legs, are well educated, and have been brought from afar, consequently they stand higher than the others in my regard."

And the fowls came, and the Cock came; to-day he was polite enough to abstain from being rude.

"You are a true singing bird," he said, "and you do as much with your little voice as can possibly be done with it. But one requires a little more shrillness, that every hearer may hear that one is a male."

The two Chinese stood quite enchanted with the appearance of the Singing Bird. He looked very much rumpled after his bath, so that he seemed to them to have quite the appearance of a little Cochin China fowl.

"He's charming," they cried, and began a conversation with him, speaking in whispers, and using the most aristocratic Chinese dialect.

"We are of your race," they continued. "The ducks, even the Portuguese, are swimming birds, as you cannot fail to have noticed. You do not know us yet; very few know us, or give themselves the trouble to make our acquaintance — not even any of the fowls, though we are born to occupy a higher grade on the ladder than most of the rest. But that does not disturb us: we quietly pursue our path amid the others, whose principles are certainly not ours; for we look at things on the favorable side, and only speak of what is good, though it is difficult sometimes to find something when nothing exists. Except us two and the Cock, there's no one in the whole poultry-yard who is at once talented and polite. It cannot even be said of the inhabitants of the duck-yard. We warn you, little Singing Bird: don't trust that one yonder with the short tail-feathers, for she's cunning. The pied one there, with the crooked stripes on her wings, is a strife-seeker, and lets nobody have the last word, though she's always in the wrong. The fat duck yonder speaks evil of every one, and

that's against our principles: if we have nothing good to tell, we should hold our beaks. The Portuguese is the only one who has any education, and with whom one can associate, but she is passionate, and talks too much about Portugal."

"I wonder what those two Chinese are always whispering to one another about?" whispered one Duck to her friend. "They annoy me — we have never spoken to them."

Now the Drake came up. He thought the little Singing Bird was a sparrow.

"Well, I don't understand the difference," he said; "and indeed it's all the same thing. He's only a plaything, and if one has them, why, one has them."

"Don't attach any value to what he says," the Portuguese whispered. "He's very respectable in business matters; and with him business takes precedence of everything. But now I shall lie down for a rest. One owes that to oneself, that one may be nice and fat when one is to be embalmed with apples and plums."

And accordingly she lay down in the sun, and winked with one eye; and she lay very comfortably, and she felt very comfortable, and she slept very comfortably.

The little Singing Bird busied himself with his broken wing. At last he lay down too, and pressed close to his protectress: the sun shone warm and bright, and he had found a very good place.

But the neighbor's fowls were awake. They went about scratching up the earth; and, to tell the truth, they had paid the visit simply and solely to find food for themselves. The Chinese were the first to leave the duck-yard, and the other fowls soon followed them. The witty little Duck said of the Portuguese that the old lady was becoming a ducky dotard. At this the other ducks laughed and cackled aloud. "Ducky dotard," they whispered; "that's too witty!" and then they repeated the former joke about Portulak, and declared that it was vastly amusing. And then they lay down.

They had been lying asleep for some time, when suddenly something was thrown into the yard for them to eat. It came down with such a thwack, that the whole company started up from sleep and clapped their wings. The Portuguese awoke

too, and threw herself over on the other side, pressing the little Singing Bird very hard as she did so.

"Piep!" he cried; "you trod very hard upon me, madam."

"Well, why do you lie in my way?" the Duck retorted. "You must not be so touchy. I have nerves of my own, but yet I never called out 'Piep!'"

"Don't be angry," said the little Bird; "the 'Piep' came out of my beak unawares."

The Portuguese did not listen to him, but began eating as fast as she could, and made a good meal. When this was ended, and she lay down again, the little Bird came up, and wanted to be amiable, and sang: —

"Tillee-lilly-lee,
Of the good spring-time
I'll sing so fine
As far away I flee."

"Now I want to rest after my dinner," said the Portuguese. "You must conform to the rules of the house while you're here. I want to sleep now."

The little Singing Bird was quite taken aback, for he had meant it kindly. When Madam afterwards awoke, he stood before her again with a little corn that he had found, and laid it at her feet; but as she had not slept well, she was naturally in a very bad humor.

"Give that to a chicken!" she said, "and don't be always standing in my way."

"Why are you angry with me?" replied the little Singing Bird. "What have I done?"

"Done!" repeated the Portuguese Duck: "your mode of expression is not exactly genteel; a fact to which I must call your attention."

"Yesterday it was sunshine here," said the little Bird, "but to-day it's cloudy and the air is close."

"You don't know much about the weather, I fancy," retorted the Portuguese. "The day is not done yet. Don't stand there looking so stupid."

"But you are looking at me just as the wicked eyes looked when I fell into the yard yesterday."

"Impertinent creature!" exclaimed the Portuguese Duck,

"would you compare me with the cat, that beast of prey? There's not a drop of malicious blood in me. I've taken your part, and will teach you good manners."

And so saying, she bit off the Singing Bird's head, and he lay dead on the ground.

"Now what's the meaning of this?" she said; "could he not bear even that? Then certainly he was not made for this world. I've been like a mother to him, I know that, for I've a good heart."

Then the neighbor's Cock stuck his head into the yard, and crowed with steam-engine power.

"You'll kill me with your crowing!" she cried. "It's all your fault. He's lost his head, and I am very near losing mine."

"There's not much lying where he fell!" observed the Cock.

"Speak of him with respect," retorted the Portuguese Duck, "for he had song, manners, and education. He was affectionate and soft, and that's as good in animals as in your so-called human beings."

And all the ducks came crowding round the little dead Singing Bird. Ducks have strong passions, whether they feel envy or pity; and as there was nothing here to envy, pity manifested itself, even in the two Chinese.

"We shall never get such a singing bird again; he was almost a Chinese," they whispered; and they wept with a mighty clucking sound, and all the fowls clucked too, but the ducks went about with the redder eyes.

"We've hearts of our own," they said; "nobody can deny that."

"Hearts!" repeated the Portuguese, "yes, that we have almost as much as in Portugal."

"Let us think of getting something to satisfy our hunger," said the Drake, "for that's the most important point. If one of our toys is broken, why, we have plenty more!"

IN THE NURSERY.

FATHER, and mother, and brothers, and sisters, were gone to the play; only little Anna and her grandpapa were left at home.

"We'll have a play, too," he said; "and it may begin immediately."

"But we have no theatre," cried little Anna, "and we have no one to act for us; my old doll cannot, for she is a fright, and my new one cannot, for she must not rumple her new clothes."

"One can always get actors if one makes use of what one has," observed Grandpapa.

"Now we'll go into the theatre. Here we will put up a book, there another, and there a third, in a sloping row. Now three on the other side; so, now we have the side-scenes. The old box that lies yonder may be the back stairs; and we'll lay the flooring on top of it. The stage represents a room, as every one may see. Now we want the actors. Let us see what we can find in the plaything-box. First the personages, and then we will get the play ready: one after the other, that will be capital! Here's a pipe-head, and yonder an odd glove; they will do very well for father and daughter."

"But those are only two characters," said little Anna. "Here's my brother's old waistcoat — could not that play in our piece, too?"

"It's big enough, certainly," replied Grandpapa. "It shall be the lover. There is nothing in the pockets, and that's very interesting, for that's half of an unfortunate attachment. And here we have the nut-cracker's boots, with spurs to them. Row, dow, dow! how they can stamp and strut! They shall represent the unwelcome wooer, whom the lady does not like. What kind of play will you have now? Shall it be a tragedy, or a domestic drama?"

"A domestic drama, please," said little Anna; "for the others are so fond of that. Do you know one?"

"I know a hundred," said Grandpapa. "Those that are

most in favor are from the French, but they are not good for little girls. In the mean time, we may take one of the prettiest, for inside they're all very much alike. Now I shake the pen! Cock-a-lorum! So now, here's the play, brin-bran-span new! Now listen to the play-bill."

And Grandpapa took a newspaper, and read as if he were reading from it: —

"'THE PIPE-HEAD AND THE GOOD HEAD.

A Family Drama in one Act.

CHARACTERS.

MR. PIPE-HEAD, *a father.* MR. WAISTCOAT, *a lover.*
MISS GLOVE, *a daughter.* MR. DE BOOTS, *a suitor.*'

"And now we're going to begin. The curtain rises: we have no curtain, so it has risen already. All the characters are there, and so we have them at hand. Now I speak as Papa Pipe-head; he's angry to-day. One can see that he's a colored meerschaum.

"'Snik, snak, snurre, bassellurre! I'm master of this house! I'm the father of my daughter! Will you hear what I have to say? Mr. de Boots is a person in whom one may see one's face; his upper part is of morocco, and he has spurs into the bargain. Snikke, snakke, snak! He shall have my daughter!'

"Now listen to what the Waistcoat says, little Anna," said Grandpapa. "Now the Waistcoat 's speaking. The Waistcoat has a lay-down collar, and is very modest; but he knows his own value, and has quite a right to say what he says: —

"'I haven't a spot on me! Goodness of material ought to be appreciated. I am of real silk, and have strings to me.'

"'— On the wedding day, but no longer: you don't keep your color in the wash.' This is Mr. Pipe-head who is speaking. 'Mr. de Boots is water-tight, of strong leather, and yet very delicate; he can creak, and clank with his spurs, and has an Italian physiognomy' "—

"But they ought to speak in verses," said Anna, "for I've heard that's the most charming way of all."

"They can do that, too," replied Grandpapa; "and if the public demands it, they will talk in that way. Just look at little Miss Glove, how she's pointing her fingers!

"'Could I but have my love,
Who then so happy as Glove!
Ah!
If I from him must part,
I'm sure 'twill break my heart!'
"'Bah!'

That last word was spoken by Papa Pipe-head; and now it's Mr. Waistcoat's turn: —

"'O Glove, my own dear,
Though it cost thee a tear,
Thou must be mine,
For Holger, the Dane, has sworn it!'

"Mr. de Boots, hearing this, kicks up, jingles his spurs, and knocks down three of the side scenes."

"That's exceedingly charming!" cried little Anna.

"Silence! silence!" said Grandpapa. "Silent approbation will show that you are the educated public in the stalls. Now Miss Glove sings her great song with startling effect: —

"'I can't see, heigho!
And therefore I'll crow!
Kikkeriki, in the lofty hall!'

"Now comes the exciting part, little Anna. This is the most important part in all the play. Mr. Waistcoat undoes himself, and addresses his speech to you, that you may applaud; but leave it alone, — that's considered more genteel.

"'I am driven to extremities! Take care of yourself! Now comes the plot! You are the Pipe-head, and I am the Good Head — snap! there you go!'

"Do you notice this, little Anna?" said Grandpapa. "That's a most charming scene and comedy; Mr. Waistcoat seized the old Pipe-head, and put him in his pocket; there he lies, and the Waistcoat says: —

"'You are in my pocket; you can't come out till you promise to unite me to your daughter Glove on the left. I hold out my right hand.'"

"That's awfully pretty," said little Anna.

"And now the old Pipe-head replies: —

"'Though I'm all ear,
Very stupid I appear:

Where's my humor? Gone, I fear,
And I feel my hollow stick 's not here.
Ah! never, my dear,
Did I feel so queer.
O! pray led me out,
And, like a lamb led to slaughter,
I'll betroth you, no doubt,
To my daughter.'"

"Is the play over already?" asked little Anna.

"By no means," replied Grandpapa. "It's only all over with Mr. de Boots. Now the lovers kneel down, and one of them sings: —

"'Father!'

and the other, —

"'Come, do as you ought to do, —
Bless your son and daughter.'

And they receive his blessing, and celebrate their wedding, and all the pieces of furniture sing in chorus, —

"'Klink! clanks!
A thousand thanks;
And now the play is over!'

"And now we'll applaud," said Grandpapa. "We'll call them all out, and the pieces of furniture too, for they are of mahogany."

"And is not our play just as good as those which the others have in the real theatre?"

"Our play is much better," said Grandpapa. "It is shorter, the performers are natural, and it has passed away the interval before tea-time."

THE FLAX.

THE Flax stood in blossom; it had pretty little blue flowers, delicate as a moth's wings and even more delicate. The sun shone on the Flax, and the rain clouds moistened it, and this was just as good for it as it is for little children when they are washed, and afterward get a kiss from their mother; they become much prettier, and so did the Flax.

"The people say that I stand uncommonly well," said the Flax, "and that I'm fine and long, and shall make a capital piece of linen. How happy I am! I'm certainly the happiest of beings. How well I am off! And I may come to something! How the sunshine gladdens, and the rain tastes good and refreshes me! I'm wonderfully happy; I'm the happiest of beings."

"Yes, yes, yes!" said the Hedge-stake. "You don't know the world, but we do, for we have knots in us;" and then it creaked out mournfully, —

"Snip-snap-snurre,
Bassellurre!
The song is done."

"No, it is not done," said the Flax. "To-morrow the sun will shine, or the rain will refresh us. I feel that I'm growing, I feel that I'm in blossom! I'm the happiest of beings."

But one day the people came and took the Flax by the head and pulled it up by the root. That hurt; and it was laid in water as if they were going to drown it, and then put on the fire as if it was going to be roasted. It was quite fearful!

"One can't always have good times," said the Flax. "One must make one's experiences, and so one gets to know something."

But bad times certainly came. The Flax was moistened, and roasted, and broken, and hackled. Yes, it did not even know what the operations were called that they did with it. It was put on the spinning-wheel — whirr! whirr! whirr! — it was not possible to collect one's thoughts.

"I have been uncommonly happy," it thought in all its pain. "One must be content with the good one has enjoyed. Contented! contented! O!" And it continued to say that when it was put into the loom, and till it became a large, beautiful piece of linen. All the Flax, to the last stalk, was used in making one piece.

"But this is quite remarkable! I should never have believed it! How favorable fortune is to me! The Hedge-stake is well informed, truly, with its —

'Snip-snap-snurre,
Bassellurre!'

The song is not done by any means. Now it's beginning in earnest. That's quite remarkable! If I've suffered something, I've been made into something! I'm the happiest of all! How strong and fine I am, how white and long! That's something different from being a mere plant: even if one bears flowers, one is not attended to, and only gets watered when it rains. Now I'm attended to and cherished: the maid turns me over every morning, and I get a shower bath from the watering-pot every evening. Yes, the clergyman's wife has even made a speech about me, and says I'm the best piece in the whole parish. I cannot possibly be happier!"

Now the Linen was taken into the house, and put under the scissors: how they cut and tore it, and then pricked it with needles! That was not pleasant; but twelve pieces of

body linen of a kind not often mentioned by name, but indispensable to all people, were made of it — a whole dozen!

"Just look! Now something has really been made of me! So; that was my destiny. That's a real blessing. Now I shall be of some use in the world, and that's right, that's a true pleasure! We've been made into twelve things, but yet we're all one and the same; we're just a dozen: how charming that is!"

Years rolled on, and now they would hold together no longer.

"It must be over one day," said each piece. "I would gladly have held together a little longer, but one must not expect impossibilities."

They were now torn into pieces and fragments. They thought it was all over now, for they were hacked to shreds, and softened, and boiled; yes, they themselves did not know all that was done to them; and then they became beautiful white paper.

"Now, that is a surprise, and a glorious surprise!" said the Paper. "Now I'm finer than before, and I shall be written on: that is remarkable good fortune."

And really the most beautiful stories and verses were written upon it, and only once there came a blot; that was certainly remarkable good fortune. And the people heard what was upon it; it was sensible and good, and made people much more sensible and better: there was a great blessing in the words that were on this Paper.

"That is more than I ever imagined when I was a little blue flower in the fields. How could I fancy that I should ever spread joy and knowledge among men? I can't yet understand it myself, but it really is so. I have done nothing myself but what I was obliged with my weak powers to do for my own preservation, and yet I have been promoted from one joy and honor to another. Each time when I think 'the song is done,' it begins again in a higher and better way. Now I shall certainly be sent about to journey through the world, so that all people may read me. That cannot be otherwise; it's the only probable thing. I have splendid thoughts, as many as I had pretty flowers in the old times. I'm the happiest of beings."

But the Paper was not sent on its travels,—it was sent to the printer, and everything that was written upon it was set up in type for a book, or rather for many hundreds of books, for in this way a very far greater number could derive pleasure and profit from the book than if the one paper on which it was written had run about the world, to be worn out before it had got half way.

"Yes, that is certainly the wisest way," thought the Written Paper. "I really did not think of that. I shall stay at home, and be held in honor, just like an old grandfather; and I am really the grandfather of all these books. Now something can be effected; I could not have wandered about thus. He who wrote all this looked at me; every word flowed from his pen right into me. I am the happiest of all."

Then the Paper was tied together in a bundle, and thrown into a tub that stood in the wash-house.

"It's good resting after work," said the Paper. "It's very right that one should collect one's thoughts. Now I'm able for the first time to think of what is in me, and to know one's self is true progress. What will be done with me now? At any rate I shall go forward again: I'm always going forward; I've found that out."

Now, one day all the Paper was taken out and laid by on the hearth; it was to be burned, for it might not be sold to hucksters to be used for covering for butter and sugar, they said. And all the children in the house stood round about, for they wanted to see the Paper burn, that flamed so prettily, and afterwards one could see many red sparks among the ashes, careering here and there. One after another faded out as quick as the wind, and that they called "seeing the children come out of school," and the last spark was the old schoolmaster: one of them thought he had already gone, but the next moment there came another spark. "There goes the schoolmaster!" they said. Yes, they knew all about it; they should have known who it was who went there: we shall get to know it, but they did not. All the old Paper, the whole bundle, was laid upon the fire, and it was soon alight. "Ugh!" it said, and burst out into bright flame. Ugh! that was not very agreeable, but when the whole was wrapped in bright

flames, these mounted up higher than the Flax had ever been able to lift its little blue flowers, and glittered as the white Linen had never been able to glitter. All the written letters turned for a moment quite red, and all the words and thoughts turned to flame.

"Now I'm mounting straight up to the sun," said a voice in the flame; and it was as if a thousand voices said this in unison; and the flames mounted up through the chimney and out at the top, and more delicate than the flames, invisible to human eyes, little tiny beings floated there, as many as there had been blossoms on the Flax. They were lighter even than the flame from which they were born; and when the flame was extinguished, and nothing remained of the Paper but black ashes, they danced over it once more, and where they touched the black mass the little red sparks appeared. The children came out of school, and the schoolmaster was the last of all. That was fun! and the children sang over the dead ashes, —

"Snip-snap-snurre,
Bassellurre!
The song is done."

But the little invisible beings all said, —

"The song is never done, that is the best of all. We know it, and therefore we're the happiest of all."

But the children could neither hear that nor understand it; nor ought they, for children must not know everything.

THE SHADOW.

IT is in the hot lands that the sun burns, sure enough! there the people become quite mahogany brown, aye, and in *the hottest* lands they are burnt to negroes. But now it was only to the *hot* lands that a learned man had come from the cold; there he thought that he could run about just as when at home, but he soon found out his mistake.

He, and all sensible folks, were obliged to stay within doors; the window-shutters and doors were closed the whole day; it looked as if the whole house slept, or there was no one at home.

The narrow street, with the high houses, was built so that the sunshine must fall there from morning till evening, — it was really not to be borne.

The learned man from the cold lands — he was a young man, and seemed to be a clever man — sat in a glowing oven; it took effect on him, he became quite meagre — even his shadow shrunk in, for the sun had also an effect on it. It was first toward evening, when the sun was down, that they began to freshen up again.

In the warm lands every window has a balcony, and the people came out on all the balconies in the street — for one

must have air, even if one be accustomed to be mahogany![1] It was lively both up and down the street. Tailors, and shoemakers, and all the folks, moved out into the street; chairs and tables were brought forth; and candles burnt — yes, above a thousand lights were burning; and the one talked and the other sung, and people walked and church-bells rang, and asses went along with a dingle-dingle-dong! for they too had bells on. The street boys were screaming and hooting, and shouting and shooting, with devils and detonating balls: and there came corpse bearers and hood wearers, — for there were funerals with psalm and hymn; and then the din of carriages driving and company arriving, — yes, it was, in truth, lively enough down in the street. Only in that single house, which stood opposite that in which the learned foreigner lived, it was quite still; and yet some one lived there, for there stood flowers in the balcony — they grew so well in the sun's heat! — and that they could not do unless they were watered; and some one must water them — there must be somebody there. The door opposite was also opened late in the evening, but it was dark within, at least in the front room; further in there was heard the sound of music. The learned foreigner thought it quite marvelous, but now — it might be that he only imagined it, for he found everything marvelous out there in the warm lands, if there had only been no sun. The stranger's landlord said that he didn't know who had taken the house opposite, one saw no person about, and as to the music, it appeared to him to be extremely tiresome. "It is as if some one sat there and practiced a piece that he could not master — always the same piece. 'I shall master it!' says he; but yet he cannot master it, however long he plays."

[1] The word *mahogany* can be understood, in Danish, as having two meanings. In general, it means the reddish-brown wood itself; but in jest, it signifies "excessively fine," which arose from an anecdote of Nyboder in Copenhagen (the seamen's quarter). A sailor's wife, who was always proud and fine, in her way, came to her neighbor and complained that she had got a splinter in her finger. "What of?" asked the neighbor's wife. "It is a mahogany splinter," said the other. "Mahogany! it cannot be less with you!" exclaimed the woman; and thence the proverb, "It is so mahogany!" (that is — so excessively fine) is derived

One night the stranger awoke — he slept with the doors of the balcony open — the curtain before it was raised by the wind, and he thought that a strange lustre came from the opposite neighbor's house; all the flowers shone like flames, in the most beautiful colors, and in the midst of the flowers stood a slender, graceful maiden, — it was as if she also shone; the light really hurt his eyes. He now opened them quite wide — yes, he was quite awake; with one spring he was on the floor; he crept gently behind the curtain, but the maiden was gone; the flowers shone no longer, but there they stood, fresh and blooming as ever: the door was ajar, and, far within, the music sounded so soft and delightful, one could really melt away in sweet thoughts from it. Yet it was like a piece of enchantment. And who lived there? Where was the actual entrance? The whole of the ground-floor was a row of shops, and there people could not always be running through.

One evening, the stranger sat out on the balcony. The light burnt in the room behind him; and thus it was quite natural that his shadow should fall on his opposite neighbor's wall. Yes, there it sat, directly opposite, between the flowers on the balcony; and when the stranger moved, the shadow also moved: for that it always does.

"I think my shadow is the only living thing one sees over there," said the Learned Man. "See! how nicely it sits between the flowers. The door stands half-open: now the shadow should be cunning, and go into the room, look about, and then come and tell me what it had seen. Come, now! be useful, and do me a service," said he, in jest. "Have the kindness to step in. Now! art thou going?" and then he nodded to the Shadow, and the Shadow nodded again. "Well, then, go! but don't stay away."

The stranger rose, and his Shadow on their opposite neighbor's balcony rose also; the stranger turned round, and the Shadow also turned round. Yes! if any one had paid particular attention to it, they would have seen, quite distinctly, that the Shadow went in through the half-open balcony-door of their opposite neighbor, just as the stranger went into his own room, and let the long curtain fall down after him.

Next morning, the Learned Man went out to drink coffee and read the newspapers.

"What is that?" said he, as he came out into the sunshine. "I have no shadow! So, then, it has actually gone last night, and not come again. It is really tiresome!"

This annoyed him: not so much because the shadow was gone, but because he knew there was a story about a man without a shadow.[1] It was known to everybody at home, in the cold lands; and if the Learned Man now came there and told his story, they would say that he was imitating it, and that he had no need to do. He would, therefore, not talk about it at all; and that was wisely thought.

In the evening, he went out again on the balcony. He had placed the light directly behind him, for he knew that the shadow would always have its master for a screen, but he could not entice it. He made himself little; he made himself great: but no shadow came again. He said, "Hem! hem!" but it was of no use.

It was vexatious; but in the warm lands everything grows so quickly; and after the lapse of eight days he observed, to his great joy, that a new shadow came in the sunshine. In the course of three weeks he had a very fair shadow, which, when he set out for his home in the northern lands, grew more and more in the journey, so that at last it was so long and so large that it was more than sufficient.

The Learned Man then came home, and he wrote books about what was true in the world, and about what was good, and what was beautiful; and there passed days and years, — yes! many years passed away.

One evening, as he was sitting in his room, there was a gentle knocking at the door.

"Come in!" said he; but no one came in; so he opened the door, and there stood before him such an extremely lean man, that he felt quite strange. As to the rest, the man was very finely dressed, — he must be a gentleman.

"Whom have I the honor of speaking to?" asked the Learned Man.

"Yes! I thought as much," said the fine man. "I thought

[1] *Peter Schlemihl, the Shadowless Man.*

you would not know me. I have got so much body. I have even got flesh and clothes. You certainly never thought of seeing me so well off. Do you not know your old Shadow? You certainly thought I should never more return. Things have gone on well with me since I was last with you. I have, in all respects, become very well off. Shall I purchase my freedom from service? If so, I can do it;" and then he rattled a whole bunch of valuable seals that hung to his watch, and he stuck his hand in the thick gold chain he wore around his neck;—nay! how all his fingers glittered with diamond rings; and then all were pure gems.

"Nay, I cannot recover from my surprise!" said the Learned Man: "what is the meaning of all this?"

"Something common it is not," said the Shadow: "but you yourself do not belong to the common order; and I, as you know well, have from a child followed in your footsteps. As soon as you found I was capable to go out alone in the world, I went my own way. I am in the most brilliant circumstances, but there came a sort of desire over me to see you once more before you die;—you will die, I suppose? I also wished to see this land again,—for you know we always love our native land. I know you have got another Shadow again; have I anything to pay to it or you? If so, you will oblige me by saying what it is."

"Nay, is it really thou?" said the Learned Man: "it is most remarkable. I never imagined that one's old shadow could come again as a man."

"Tell me what I have to pay," said the Shadow; "for I don't like to be in any sort of debt."

"How canst thou talk so?" said the Learned Man; "what debt is there to talk about? Make thyself as free as any one else. I am extremely glad to hear of thy good fortune: sit down, old friend, and tell me a little how it has gone with thee, and what thou hast seen at our opposite neighbor's there—in the warm lands."

"Yes, I will tell you all about it," said the Shadow, and sat down: "but then you must also promise me, that, wherever you may meet me, you will never say to any one here in the

town that I have been your shadow. I intend to get betrothed, for I can provide for more than one family."

"Be quite at thy ease about that," said the Learned Man; "I shall not say to any one who thou actually art; here is my hand — I promise it, and a man's bond is his word."

"A word is a shadow," said the Shadow, "and as such it must speak."

It was really quite astonishing how much of a man it was. It was dressed entirely in black, and of the very finest cloth; it had patent leather boots, and a hat that could be folded together, so that it was bare crown and brim; not to speak of what we already know it had — seals, gold neck-chain, and diamond rings; yes, the Shadow was well-dressed, and it was just that which made it quite a man.

"Now I shall tell you my adventures," said the Shadow; and then he sat, with the polished boots on, as heavily as he could on the arm of the Learned Man's new shadow, which lay like a poodle-dog at his feet. Now this was perhaps from arrogance; and the shadow on the ground kept itself so still and quiet, that it might hear all that passed: it wished to know how it could get free, and work its way up, so as to become its own master.

"Do you know who lived in our opposite neighbor's house?" said the Shadow; "it was the most charming of all beings, it was Poetry! I was there for three weeks, and that has as much effect as if one had lived three thousand years, and read all that was composed and written; that is what I say, and it is right. I have seen everything, and I know everything!"

"Poetry!" cried the Learned Man; "yes, yes, she is often an anchoret in the large towns! Poetry! yes, I have seen her, — a single, short moment, but sleep came into my eyes! She stood on the balcony and shone as the aurora borealis shines. Go on, go on! — thou wert on the balcony, and went through the door-way, and then" —

"Then I was in the antechamber," said the Shadow. "You always sat and looked over to the antechamber. There was no light; there was a sort of twilight, but the one door stood open directly opposite the other through a long row of rooms

and saloons, and there it was lighted up. I should have been completely killed if I had gone over to the maiden; but I was circumspect, I took time to think, and that one must always do."

"And what didst thou then see?" asked the Learned Man.

"I saw everything, and I shall tell all to you; but, — it is no pride on my part, — as a free man, and with the knowledge I have, not to speak of my position in life, my excellent circumstances, — I certainly wish that you would say *you*[1] to me!"

"I beg your pardon," said the Learned Man; "it is an old habit with me. *You* are perfectly right, and I shall remember it; but now *you* must tell me all that *you* saw!"

"Everything!" said the Shadow, "for I saw everything, and I know everything!"

"How did it look in the furthest saloon?" asked the Learned Man. "Was it there as in the fresh woods? Was it there as in a holy church? Were the saloons like the starlit firmament when we stand on the high mountains?"

"Everything was there!" said the Shadow. "I did not go quite in; I remained in the foremost room, in the twilight, but I stood there quite well; I saw everything, and I know everything! I have been in the antechamber at the court of Poetry."

"But *what did* you see? Did all the gods of the olden times pass through the large saloons? Did the old heroes combat there? Did sweet children play there, and relate their dreams?"

[1] It is the custom in Denmark for intimate acquaintances to use the second person singular "Du" (thou) when speaking to each other. When a friendship is ormed between men, they generally affirm it, when occasion offers, either in public or private, by drinking to each other and exclaiming, "*Thy health*," at the same time striking their glasses together. This is called drinking "*Duus:*" — they are then, "*Duus Brodre*" (thou brothers), and ever afterwards use the pronoun "*thou*" to each other, it being regarded as more familiar than "*De*" (you). Father and mother, sister and brother, say *thou* to one another, without regard to age or rank. Master and mistress say *thou* to their servants — the superior to the inferior. But servants and inferiors do not use the same term to their masters, or superiors — nor is it ever used when speaking to a stranger, or any one with whom they are but slightly acquainted; they then say, as in English — *you*.

"I tell you I was there, and you can conceive that I saw everything there was to be seen. Had you come over there, you would not have been a man; but I became so! And besides, I learned to know my inward nature, my innate qualities, the relationship I had with Poetry. At the time I was with you, I thought not of that, but always — you know it well — when the sun rose, and when the sun went down, I became so strangely great; in the moonlight I was very near being more distinct than yourself; at that time I did not understand my nature; it was revealed to me in the antechamber! I became a man! I came out matured; but you were no longer in the warm lands: as a man I was ashamed to go as I did. I was in want of boots, of clothes, of the whole human varnish that makes a man perceptible. I took my way — I tell it to you, but you will not put it in any book — I took my way to the cake woman — I hid myself behind her; the woman didn't think how much she concealed. I went out first in the evening; I ran about the streets in the moonlight; I made myself long up the walls — it tickles the back so delightfully! I ran up, and I ran down, peeped into the highest windows, into the saloons, and on the roofs. I peeped in where no one could peep, and I saw what no one else saw, what no one should see! This is, in fact, a base world! I would not be a man if it were not now once accepted and regarded as something to be so! I saw the most unimaginable things with the women, with the men, with parents, and with the sweet, matchless children; I saw," said the Shadow, "what no human being must know, but what they would all so willingly know — what is bad in their neighbor. Had I written a newspaper, it would have been read! but I wrote direct to the persons themselves, and there was consternation in all the towns where I came. They were so afraid of me, and yet they were so excessively fond of me. The professors made a professor of me; the tailors gave me new clothes — I am well furnished; the master of the mint struck new coin for me, and the women said I was so handsome! and so I became the man I am. And I now bid you farewell; — here is my card — I live on the sunny side of the street, and am always at home in rainy weather!" And so away went the Shadow.

"That was most extraordinary!" said the Learned Man.

Years and days passed away, then the Shadow came again.

"How goes it?" said the Shadow.

"Alas!" said the Learned Man, "I write about the true, and the good, and the beautiful, but no one cares to hear such things! I am quite desperate, for I take it so much to heart!"

"But I don't!" said the Shadow; "I become fat, and it is that one wants to become! You do not understand the world. You will become ill by it. You must travel! I shall make a tour this summer; will you go with me? I should like to have a travelling companion! will you go with me, as shadow? It will be a great pleasure for me to have you with me, — I shall pay the travelling expenses!"

"Nay, this is too much!" said the Learned Man.

"It is just as one takes it," said the Shadow. "It will do you much good to travel! — will you be my shadow? — you shall have everything free on the journey!"

"Nay, that is too bad!" said the Learned Man.

"But it is just so with the world!" said the Shadow, "and so it will be!" and away it went again.

The Learned Man was not at all in the most enviable state; grief and torment followed him, and what he said about the true, and the good, and the beautiful was, to most persons, like roses for a cow! — he was quite ill at last.

"You really look like a shadow!" said his friends to him; and the Learned Man trembled, for he thought of it.

"You must go to a watering-place!" said the Shadow, who came and visited him; "there is nothing else for it! I will take you with me for old acquaintance sake; I will pay the travelling expenses, and you write the descriptions — and you may make them amusing if you please. I will go to a watering place, — my beard does not grow out as it ought — that is also a sickness, and one must have a beard. Now you be wise and accept the offer; we shall travel as comrades!"

And so they travelled; the Shadow was master, and the master was the Shadow; they drove with each other, they rode and walked together, side by side, before and behind, just as the sun was; the Shadow always took care to keep itself in the master's place. Now the Learned Man didn't think much

about that; he was a very kind-hearted man, and particularly mild and friendly, and so he said one day to the Shadow: "As we have now become companions, and in this way have grown up together from childhood, shall we not drink '*thou*' together? it is more familiar."

"You are right!" said the Shadow, who was now the proper master. "It is said in a very straightforward and well-meant manner. You, as a learned man, certainly know how strange nature is. Some persons cannot bear to touch gray paper, or they become ill; others shiver in every limb if one rub a pane of glass with a nail: I have just such a feeling on hearing you say *thou* to me; I feel myself as if pressed to the earth in my first situation with you. You see that it is a feeling; that it is not pride: I cannot allow you to say *thou* to me, but I will willingly say *thou* to you, so it is half done!"

So the Shadow said *thou* to its former master.

"This is rather too bad," thought he, "that I must say *you* and he say *thou*," but he was now obliged to put up with it.

So they came to a watering-place where there were many strangers, and amongst them was a princess who was troubled with seeing too well; and that was so alarming!

She directly observed that the stranger who had just come was quite a different sort of person to all the others: "He has come here in order to get his beard to grow, they say; but I see the real cause, he cannot cast a shadow."

She had become inquisitive; and so she entered into conversation directly with the strange gentleman, on their promenades. As the daughter of a king, she needed not to stand upon trifles, so she said, "Your complaint is, that you cannot cast a shadow?"

"Your royal highness must be improving considerably," said the Shadow. "I know your complaint is, that you see too clearly; but it has decreased, you are cured. I just happen to have a very unusual shadow! Do you not see that person who always goes with me? Other persons have a common shadow, but I do not like what is common to all. We give our servants finer cloth for their livery than we ourselves use, and so I had my shadow trimmed up into a man: yes, you see I have even given him a shadow. It is somewhat expensive, but I like to have something for myself!"

"What!" thought the Princess, "should I really be cured! These baths are the first in the world! In our time water has wonderful powers. But I shall not leave the place, for it now begins to be amusing here. I am extremely fond of that stranger. Would that his beard should not grow! for in that case he will leave us."

In the evening the Princess and the Shadow danced together in the large ball-room. She was light, but he was still lighter; she had never had such a partner in the dance. She told him from what land she came, and he knew that land; he had been there, but then she was not at home; he had peeped in at the window above and below — he had seen both the one and the other, and so he could answer the Princess, and make insinuations, so that she was quite astonished; he must be the wisest man in the whole world! she felt such respect for what he knew! So that when they again danced together she fell in love with him; and that the Shadow could remark, for she almost pierced him through with her eyes. So they danced once more together; and she was about to declare herself, but she was discreet; she thought of her country and kingdom, and of the many persons she would have to reign over.

"He is a wise man," said she to herself — "it is well; and he dances delightfully — that is also good; but has he solid knowledge? — that is just as important! — he must be examined."

So she began, by degrees, to question him about the most difficult things she could think of, and which she herself could not have answered; so that the Shadow made a strange face.

"You cannot answer these questions?" said the Princess.

"They belong to my childhood's learning," said the Shadow. "I really believe my shadow, by the door there, can answer them!"

"Your shadow!" said the Princess; "that would indeed be marvelous!"

"I will not say for a certainty that he can," said the Shadow, "but I think so; he has now followed me for so many years, and listened to my conversation — I should think it possible. But your royal highness will permit me to observe, that he is so proud of passing himself off for a man, that when he is

to be in a proper humor — and he must be so to answer well — he must be treated quite like a man."

"O! I like that!" said the Princess.

So she went to the Learned Man by the door, and she spoke with him about the sun and the moon, and about persons out of and in the world, and he answered with wisdom and prudence.

"What a man that must be who has so wise a shadow!" thought she; "it will be a real blessing for my people and kingdom if I choose him for my consort — I will do it!"

They were soon agreed, both the Princess and the Shadow; but no one was to know about it before she arrived in her own kingdom.

"No one — not even my shadow!" said the Shadow; and he had his own thoughts about it!

Now they were in the country where the Princess lived when she was at home.

"Listen, my good friend!" said the Shadow to the Learned Man. "I have now become as happy and mighty as any one can be; I will, therefore, do something particular for thee! Thou shalt always live with me in the palace, drive with me in my royal carriage, and have ten thousand pounds a-year; but then thou must submit to be called *shadow* by all and every one; thou must not say that thou hast ever been a man; and once a year, when I sit on the balcony in the sunshine, thou must lie at my feet, as a shadow shall do! I must tell thee: I am going to marry the king's daughter, and the nuptials are to take place this evening!"

"Nay, this is going too far!" said the Learned Man; "I will not have it; I will not do it! It is to deceive the whole country and the Princess too! I will tell everything! — that I am a man and that thou art a shadow — thou art only dressed up!"

"There is no one who will believe it!" said the Shadow; "be reasonable, or I will call the guard!"

"I will go directly to the Princess!" said the Learned Man.

"But I will go first!" said the Shadow, "and thou wilt go to prison!" and that he was obliged to do — for the sentinels obeyed him whom they knew the king's daughter was to marry.

"You tremble!" said the Princess, as the Shadow came into

her chamber; "has anything happened? You must not be unwell this evening, now that we are to have our nuptials celebrated."

"I have lived to see the most cruel thing that any one can live to see!" said the Shadow. "Only imagine — yes, it is true, such a poor shadow-skull cannot bear much — only think, my shadow has become mad: he thinks that he is a man, and that I — now only think — that I am his shadow!"

"It is terrible!" said the Princess; "but he is confined, is he not?"

"That he is. I am afraid that he will never recover."

"Poor shadow!" said the Princess, "he is very unfortunate; it would be a real work of charity to deliver him from the little life he has, and when I think properly over the matter, I am of opinion that it will be necessary to do away with him in all stillness!"

"It is certainly hard!" said the Shadow, "for he was a faithful servant!" and then he gave a sort of sigh.

"You are a noble character!" said the Princess.

The whole city was illuminated in the evening, and the cannons went off with a bum! bum! and the soldiers presented arms. That was a marriage! The Princess and the Shadow went out on the balcony to show themselves, and get another hurrah!

The Learned Man heard nothing of all this — for they had deprived him of life.

THE RED SHOES.

THERE was once a little girl, — a very nice, pretty little girl. But in summer she had to go barefoot, because she was poor, and in winter she wore thick wooden shoes, so that her little instep became quite red, altogether red.

In the middle of the village lived an old shoemaker's wife; she sat and sewed, as well as she could, a pair of little shoes, of old strips of red cloth; they were clumsy enough, but well meant, and the little girl was to have them. The little girl's name was Karen.

On the day when her mother was buried she received the red shoes and wore them for the first time. They were certainly not suited for mourning; but she had no others, and therefore thrust her little bare feet into them and walked behind the plain deal coffin.

Suddenly a great carriage came by, and in the carriage sat an old lady: she looked at the little girl and felt pity for her, and said to the clergyman, —

"Give me the little girl, and I will provide for her."

Karen thought this was for the sake of the shoes; but the Old Lady declared they were hideous; and they were burned. But Karen herself was clothed neatly and properly: she was taught to read and to sew, and the people said she was agreeable. But her mirror said, "You are much more than agreeable; you are beautiful."

Once the Queen travelled through the country, and had her little daughter with her; and the daughter was a Princess. And the people flocked toward the castle, and Karen too

was among them; and the little Princess stood in a fine white dress at a window, and let herself be gazed at. She had neither train nor golden crown, but she wore splendid red morocco shoes; they were certainly far handsomer than those the shoemaker's wife had made for little Karen. Nothing in the world can compare with red shoes!

Now Karen was old enough to be confirmed: new clothes were made for her, and she was to have new shoes. The rich shoemaker in the town took the measure of her little feet; this was done in his own house, in his little room, and there stood great glass cases with neat shoes and shining boots. It had quite a charming appearance, but the Old Lady could not see well, and therefore took no pleasure in it. Among the shoes stood a red pair, just like those which the Princess had worn. How beautiful they were! The shoemaker also said they had been made for a count's child, but they had not fitted.

"That must be patent leather," observed the Old Lady, "the shoes shine so!"

"Yes, they shine!" replied Karen; and they fitted her, and were bought. But the Old Lady did not know that they were red; for she would never have allowed Karen to go to her Confirmation in red shoes; and that is what Karen did.

Every one was looking at her shoes. And when she went across the church porch, toward the door of the choir, it seemed to her as if the old pictures on the tombstones, the portraits of clergymen and clergymen's wives, in their stiff collars and long black garments, fixed their eyes upon her red shoes. And she thought of her shoes only, when the priest laid his hand upon her head and spoke holy words. And the organ pealed solemnly, the children sang with their fresh sweet voices, and the old precentor sang too; but Karen thought only of her red shoes.

In the afternoon the Old Lady was informed by every one that the shoes were red; and she said it was naughty and unsuitable, and that when Karen went to church in future, she should always go in black shoes, even if they were old.

Next Sunday was Sacrament Sunday. And Karen looked

at the black shoes, and looked at the red ones — looked at them again — and put on the red ones.

The sun shone gloriously ; Karen and the Old Lady went along the foot-path through the fields, and it was rather dusty.

By the church door stood an old invalid soldier with a crutch and a long beard ; the beard was rather red than white, for it was red altogether ; and he bowed down almost to the ground, and asked the Old Lady if he might dust her shoes. And Karen also stretched out her little foot.

" Look, what pretty dancing shoes ! " said the Old Soldier. " Fit so tightly when you dance ! "

And he tapped the soles with his hand. And the Old Lady gave the Soldier an alms, and went into the church with Karen.

And every one in the church looked at Karen's red shoes, and all the pictures looked at them. And while Karen knelt in the church she only thought of her red shoes ; and she forgot to sing her psalm, and forgot to say her prayer.

Now all the people went out of church, and the Old Lady stepped into her carriage. Karen lifted up her foot to step in too ; then the Old Soldier said, —

" Look, what beautiful dancing shoes ! "

And Karen could not resist : she was obliged to dance a few steps ; and when she once began, her legs went on dancing. It was just as though the shoes had obtained power over her. She danced round the corner of the church — she could not help it ; the coachman was obliged to run behind her and seize her : he lifted her into the carriage, but her feet went on dancing, so that she kicked the good Old Lady violently. At last they took off her shoes and her legs became quiet.

At home the shoes were put away in a cupboard ; but Karen could not resist looking at them.

Now the Old Lady became very ill, and it was said she would not recover. She had to be nursed and waited on ; and this was no one's duty so much as Karen's. But there was to be a great ball in the town, and Karen was invited. She looked at the Old Lady who could not recover ; she looked at the red shoes, and thought there would be no harm in it. She put on

the shoes, and that she might very well do; but they went to the ball and began to dance.

But when she wished to go to the right hand, the shoes danced to the left, and when she wanted to go up-stairs the shoes danced downward, down into the street and out at the town gate. She danced, and was obliged to dance, straight out into the dark wood.

There was something glistening up among the trees, and she thought it was the moon, for she saw a face. But it was the Old Soldier with the red beard: he sat and nodded, and said, —

"Look, what beautiful dancing shoes!"

Then she was frightened, and wanted to throw away the red shoes; but they clung fast to her. And she tore off her stockings: but the shoes had grown fast to her feet. And she danced and was compelled to go dancing over field and meadow, in rain and sunshine, by night and by day; but it was most dreadful at night.

She danced out into the open church-yard; but the dead there do not dance; they have far better things to do. She wished to sit down on the poor man's grave, where the bitter fern grows; but there was no peace nor rest for her. And when she danced toward the open church door, she saw there an angel in long white garments, with wings that reached from his shoulders to his feet; his countenance was serious and stern, and in his hand he held a sword that was broad and gleaming.

"Thou shalt dance!" he said — "dance on thy red shoes, till thou art pale and cold, and till thy body shrivels to a skeleton. Thou shalt dance from door to door; and where proud, haughty children dwell, shalt thou knock, that they may hear thee, and be afraid of thee! Thou shalt dance, dance!"

"Mercy!" cried Karen.

But she did not hear what the Angel answered, for the shoes carried her away — carried her through the door on to the field, over stock and stone, and she was always obliged to dance.

One morning she danced past a door which she knew well. There was a sound of psalm-singing within, and a coffin was carried out, adorned with flowers. Then she knew that the Old Lady was dead, and she felt that she was deserted by all, and condemned by the Angel of heaven.

She danced, and was compelled to dance — to dance in the dark night. The shoes carried her on over thorn and brier; she scratched herself till she bled; she danced away across the heath to a little lonely house. Here she knew the executioner dwelt; and she tapped with her fingers on the panes, and called, —

"Come out, come out! I cannot come in, for I must dance!"

And the Executioner said, —

"You probably don't know who I am? I cut off the bad people's heads with my axe, and mark how my axe rings!"

"Do not strike off my head," said Karen, "for if you do I cannot repent of my sin. But strike off my feet with the red shoes!"

And then she confessed all her sin, and the Executioner cut off her feet with the red shoes; but the shoes danced away with the little feet over the fields and into the deep forest.

And he cut her a pair of wooden feet, with crutches, and taught her a psalm, which the criminals always sing; and she kissed the hand that had held the axe, and went away across the heath.

"Now I have suffered pain enough for the red shoes," said she. "Now I will go into the church, that they may see me."

And she went quickly toward the church door; but when she came there the red shoes danced before her, so that she was frightened and turned back.

The whole week through she was sorrowful, and wept many bitter tears; but when Sunday came, she said, —

"Now I have suffered and striven enough! I think that I am just as good as many of those who sit in the church and carry their heads high."

And then she went boldly on; but she did not get farther than the church-yard gate before she saw the red shoes dan-

cing along before her: then she was seized with terror, and turned back, and repented of her sin right heartily.

And she went to the parsonage, and begged to be taken there as a servant. She promised to be industrious, and to do all she could: she did not care for wages, and only wished to be under a roof and with good people. The clergyman's wife pitied her, and took her into her service. And she was industrious and thoughtful. Silently she sat and listened when in the evening the pastor read the Bible aloud. All the little ones were very fond of her; but when they spoke of dress and splendor and beauty she would shake her head.

Next Sunday they all went to church, and she was asked if she wished to go too; but she looked sadly, with tears in her eyes, at her crutches. And then the others went to hear God's word; but she went alone into her little room, which was only large enough to contain her bed and a chair. And here she sat with her hymn-book; and as she read it with a pious mind, the wind bore the notes of the organ over to her from the church; and she lifted up her face, wet with tears, and said, —

"O Lord, help me!"

Then the sun shone so brightly; and before her stood the Angel in the white garments, the same she had seen that night at the church door. But he no longer grasped the sharp sword: he held a green branch covered with roses; and he touched the ceiling, and it rose up high and wherever he touched it a golden star gleamed forth; and he touched the walls, and they spread forth widely, and she saw the organ which was pealing its rich sounds; and she saw the old pictures of clergymen and their wives; and the congregation sat in the decorated seats, and sang from their hymn-books. The church had come to the poor girl in her narrow room, or her chamber had become a church. She sat in the chair with the rest of the clergyman's people; and when they had finished the psalm, and looked up, they nodded and said, —

"That was right, that you came here, Karen."

"It was mercy!" said she.

And the organ sounded its glorious notes; and the chil-

dren's voices singing in chorus sounded sweet and lovely; the clear sunshine streamed so warm through the window upon the chair in which Karen sat; and her heart became so filled with sunshine, peace, and joy that it broke. Her soul flew on the sunbeams to heaven; and there was nobody who asked after the RED SHOES!

THE SNAIL AND THE ROSE-TREE.

AROUND the garden ran a hedge of hazels; beyond this hedge lay fields and meadows, wherein were cows and sheep; but in the midst of the garden stood a blooming Rose-tree; and under this Rose-tree lived a Snail, who had a good deal in his shell — namely, himself.

"Wait till my time comes!" he said: "I shall do something more than produce roses, bear nuts, or give milk, like the Rose-tree, the hazel-bush, and the cows!"

"I expect a great deal of you," said the Rose-tree. "But may I ask when it will appear?"

"I take my time," replied the Snail. "*You* 're always in such a hurry. You don't rouse people's interest by suspense."

When the next year came, the Snail lay almost in the same spot, in the sunshine under the Rose-tree, which again bore buds that bloomed into roses, until the snow fell and the weather became raw and cold; then the Rose-tree bowed its head and the Snail crept into the ground.

A new year began; and the roses came out, and the Snail came out also.

"You're an old Rose-tree now!" said the Snail. "You must make haste and come to an end, for you have given the world all that was in you: whether it was of any use is a question that I have had no time to consider; but so much is clear and plain, that you have done nothing at all for your own development, or you would have produced something else. How can you answer for that? In a little time you will be nothing at all but a stick. Do you understand what I say?"

"You alarm me!" replied the Rose-tree. "I never thought of that at all."

"No, you have not taken the trouble to consider anything. Have you ever given an account to yourself, why you bloomed, and how it is that your blooming comes about — why it is thus, and not otherwise?"

"No," answered the Rose-tree. "I bloomed in gladness, because I could not do anything else. The sun shone and warmed me, and the air refreshed me. I drank the pure dew and the fresh rain, and I lived, I breathed. Out of the earth there arose a power within me; from above there came down a strength: I perceived a new ever-increasing happiness, and consequently I was obliged to bloom over and over again: that was my life; I could not do otherwise."

"You have led a pleasant life," observed the Snail.

"Certainly. Everything I have was given to me," said the Rose-tree. "But more still was given to you. You are one of those deep thoughtful characters, one of those highly gifted spirits, which will cause the world to marvel."

"I've no intention of doing anything of the kind," cried the Snail. "The world is nothing to me. What have I to do with the world? I have enough of myself and in myself."

"But must we not all, here on earth, give to others the best we have, and offer what lies in our power? Certainly I have only given roses. But you — you who have been so richly gifted — what have you given to the world? what do you intend to give?"

"What have I given — what do I intend to give? I spit at it. It's worth nothing. It's no business of mine. Continue to give your roses, if you like: you can't do any better. Let the hazel-bush bear nuts, and the cows and the ewes give milk: they have their public; but I have mine within myself — I retire within myself, and there I remain. The world is nothing to me." And so saying the Snail retired into his house, and closed up the entrance after him.

"That is very sad!" said the Rose-tree. "I cannot creep into myself, even if I wished it; I must continue to produce roses. They drop their leaves, and are blown away by the wind. But I saw how a rose was laid in the matron's hymn-book, and one of my roses had a place on the bosom of a fair young girl, and another was kissed by the lips of a child in the full joy of life. That did me good; it was a real blessing. That's my remembrance — my life!"

And the Rose-tree went on blooming in innocence, while the Snail lay and idled away his time in his house — the world did not concern him.

And years rolled by.

The Snail had become dust in the dust, and the Rose-tree was earth in the earth; the rose of remembrance in the hymn-book was faded, but in the garden bloomed fresh rose-trees, and under the trees lay new snails; and these still crept into their houses, and spat at the world, for it did not concern them.

Suppose we begin the story again, and read it right through. It will never alter.

LITTLE IDA'S FLOWERS.

"MY poor flowers are quite dead!" said little Ida. "They were so pretty yesterday, and now all the leaves hang withered. Why do they do that?" she asked the student, who sat on the sofa; for she liked him very much. He knew the prettiest stories, and could cut out the most amusing pictures: hearts, with little ladies in them who danced; flowers, and great castles in which one could open the doors; he was a merry student. "Why do the flowers look so faded to-day?" she asked again, and showed him a nosegay, which was quite withered.

"Do you know what's the matter with them?" said the Student. "The flowers have been at a ball last night, and that's why they hang their heads."

"But flowers cannot dance!" cried little Ida.

"O yes," said the Student, "when it grows dark, and we are asleep, they jump about merrily. Almost every night they have a ball."

"Can children go to this ball?"

"Yes," said the Student, "quite little daisies, and lilies of the valley."

"Where do the beautiful flowers dance?" asked Ida.

"Have you not often been outside the town gate, by the great castle, where the king lives in summer, and where the beautiful garden is with all the flowers? You have seen the swans, which swim up to you when you want to give them bread crumbs? There are capital balls there, believe me."

"I was out there in the garden yesterday, with my mother," said Ida; "but all the leaves were off the trees, and there was not one flower left. Where are they? In the summer I saw so many."

"They are within, in the castle," replied the Student. "You must know, as soon as the king and all the court go to town, the flowers run out of the garden into the castle and are merry. You should see that. The two most beautiful roses seat themselves on the throne, and then they are king and queen; all the red coxcombs range themselves on either side, and stand and bow; they are the chamberlains. Then all the pretty flowers come, and there is a great ball. The blue violets represent little naval cadets; they dance with hyacinths and crocuses, which they call young ladies; the tulips and the great tiger-lilies are old ladies who keep watch that the dancing is well done, and that everything goes on with propriety."

"But," asked little Ida, "is nobody there who hurts the flowers, for dancing in the king's castle?"

"There is nobody who really knows about it," answered the Student. "Sometimes, certainly, the old steward of the castle comes at night, and he has to watch there. He has a great bunch of keys with him; but as soon as the flowers hear the keys rattle they are quite quiet, hide behind the long curtains, and only poke their heads out. Then the old steward says, 'I smell that there are flowers here,' but he cannot see them."

"That is famous!" cried little Ida, clapping her hands. "But should not I be able to see the flowers?"

"Yes," said the Student: "only remember, when you go out again, to peep through the window; then you will see them. That is what I did to-day. There was a long yellow lily lying on the sofa and stretching herself. She was a court lady."

"Can the flowers out of the Botanical Garden get there Can they go the long distance?"

"Yes, certainly," replied the Student; "if they like they can fly. Have you not seen the beautiful butterflies — red, yellow, and white? They almost look like flowers; and that is what they have been. They have flown off their stalks high into the air, and have beaten it with their leaves, as if these leaves were little wings, and thus they flew. And because they behaved themselves well, they got leave to fly about in the day-time too, and were not obliged to sit still upon their stalks at home; and thus at last the leaves became real wings. That you have seen yourself. It may be, however, that the flowers in the Botanical Garden have never been in the king's castle, or that they don't know of the merry proceedings there at night. Therefore I will tell you something: he will be very much surprised, the botanical professor, who lives close by here. You know him, do you not? When you come into his garden, you must tell one of the flowers that there is a great ball yonder in the castle. Then that flower will tell it to all the rest, and then they will fly away: when the professor comes out into the garden, there will not be a single flower left, and he won't be able to make out where they are gone."

"But how can one flower tell it to another? For, you know, flowers cannot speak."

"That they cannot, certainly," replied the Student; "but then they make signs. Have you not noticed that when the wind blows a little, the flowers nod at one another, and move all their green leaves? They can understand that just as well as we when we speak together."

"Can the professor understand these signs?" asked Ida.

"Yes, certainly. He came one morning into his garden, and saw a great stinging-nettle standing there, and making signs to a beautiful red carnation with its leaves. It was saying, 'You are so pretty, and I love you with all my heart.' But the professor does not like that kind of thing, and he directly slapped the stinging-nettle upon its leaves, for those are its fingers; but he stung himself, and since that time he has not dared to touch a stinging-nettle."

"That is funny," cried little Ida; and she laughed.

"How can any one put such notions into a child's head?" said the tiresome Privy Councilor, who had come to pay a visit, and was sitting on the sofa. He did not like the Student, and always grumbled when he saw him cutting out the merry, funny pictures — sometimes a man hanging on a gibbet and holding a heart in his hand, to show that he stole hearts; sometimes an old witch riding on a broom, and carrying her husband on her nose. The Councilor could not bear this, and then he said, just as he did now, "How can any one put such notions into a child's head? Those are stupid fancies!"

But to little Ida, what the Student told about her flowers seemed very droll; and she thought much about it. The flowers hung their heads, for they were tired because they had danced all night; they were certainly ill. Then she went with them to her other toys, which stood on a pretty little table, and the whole drawer was full of beautiful things. In the doll's bed lay her doll Sophy, asleep; but little Ida said to her, —

"You must really get up, Sophy, and manage to lie in the drawer for to-night. The poor flowers are ill, and they must lie in your bed; perhaps they will then get well again."

And she at once took the doll out; but the doll looked cross, and did not say a single word; for she was cross because she could not keep her own bed.

Then Ida laid the flowers in the doll's bed, pulled the little coverlet quite up over them, and said they were to lie still and be good, and she would make them some tea, so that they might get well again, and be able to get up to-morrow. And she drew the curtains closely round the little bed, so that the sun should not shine in their eyes. The whole evening through she could not help thinking of what the Student had told her. And when she was going to bed herself, she was obliged first to look behind the curtains which hung before the windows where her mother's beautiful flowers stood — hyacinths as well as tulips; then she whispered, "I know you are going to the ball to-night!" But the flowers made as if they did not understand a word, and did not stir a leaf; but still little Ida knew what she knew.

When she was in bed she lay for a long time thinking how

pretty it must be to see the beautiful flowers dancing out in the king's castle. "I wonder if my flowers have really been there?" And then she fell asleep. In the night she woke up again: she had dreamed of the flowers, and of the Student with whom the Councilor found fault. It was quite quiet in the bedroom where Ida lay; the night-lamp burned on the table, and father and mother were asleep.

"I wonder if my flowers are still lying in Sophy's bed?" she thought to herself. "How I should like to know it!" She raised herself a little, and looked at the door, which stood ajar: within lay the flowers and all her playthings. She listened, and then it seemed to her as if she heard some one playing on the piano in the next room, but quite softly and prettily, as she had never heard it before.

"Now all the flowers are certainly dancing in there!" thought she. "O, how glad I should be to see it!" But she dared not get up, for she would have disturbed her father and mother.

"If they would only come in!" thought she. But the flowers did not come, and the music continued to play beautifully; then she could not bear it any longer, for it was too pretty; she crept out of her little bed, and went quietly to the door, and looked into the room.

O, how splendid it was, what she saw!

There was no night-lamp burning, but still it was quite light: the moon shone through the window into the middle of the floor; it was almost like day. All the hyacinths and tulips stood in two long rows in the room; there were none at all left at the window — there stood the empty flower-pots. On the floor all the flowers were dancing very gracefully round each other, making perfect turns, and holding each other by the long green leaves as they swung round. But at the piano sat a great yellow lily, which little Ida had certainly seen in summer, for she remembered how the Student had said, "How like that one is to Miss Lina." Then he had been laughed at by all; but now it seemed really to little Ida as if the long, yellow flower looked like the young lady; and it had just her manners in playing — sometimes bending its long, yellow face to one side, sometimes to the other, and nodding in

tune to the charming music! No one noticed little Ida. Then she saw a great blue crocus hop into the middle of the table, where the toys stood, and go to the doll's bed and pull the curtains aside; there lay the sick flowers, but they got up directly, and nodded to the others, to say that they wanted to dance too. The old Chimney-sweep doll, whose under lip was broken off, stood up and bowed to the pretty flowers: these did not look at all ill now; they jumped down to the others, and were very merry.

Then it seemed as if something fell down from the table. Ida looked that way. It was the birch rod which was jumping down! it seemed almost as if it belonged to the flowers. At any rate it was very neat; and a little wax doll, with just such a broad hat on its head as the Councilor wore, sat upon it. The birch rod hopped about among the flowers on its three legs, and stamped quite loud, for it was dancing the mazourka; and the other flowers could not manage that dance, because they were too light, and unable to stamp like that.

The wax doll on the birch rod all at once became quite great and long, turned itself over the paper flowers, and said, "How can one put such things in a child's head? those are stupid fancies!" and then the wax doll was exactly like the Councilor with the broad hat, and looked just as yellow and cross as he. But the paper flowers hit him on his thin legs, and then he shrank up again, and became quite a little wax doll. That was very amusing to see; and little Ida could not restrain her laughter. The birch rod went on dancing, and the Councilor was obliged to dance too; it was no use, he might make himself great and long, or remain the little yellow wax doll with the big black hat. Then the other flowers put in a good word for him, especially those who had lain in the doll's bed, and then the birch rod gave over. At the same moment there was a loud knocking at the drawer, inside where Ida's doll, Sophy, lay with many other toys. The Chimney-sweep ran to the edge of the table, lay flat down on his stomach, and began to pull the drawer out a little. Then Sophy raised herself, and looked round quite astonished.

"There must be a ball here," said she; "why did nobody tell me?"

"Will you dance with me?" asked the Chimney-sweep.

"You are a nice sort of fellow to dance!" she replied, and turned her back upon him.

Then she seated herself upon the drawer, and thought that one of the flowers would come and ask her; but not one of them came. Then she coughed, "Hem! hem! hem!" but for all that not one came. The Chimney-sweep now danced all alone, and that was not at all so bad.

As none of the flowers seemed to notice Sophy, she let herself fall down from the drawer straight upon the floor, so that there was a great noise. The flowers now all came running up, to ask if she had not hurt herself; and they were all very polite to her, especially the flowers that had lain in her bed. But she had not hurt herself at all; and Ida's flowers all thanked her for the nice bed, and were kind to her, took her into the middle of the room, where the moon shone in, and danced with her; and all the other flowers formed a circle round her. Now Sophy was glad, and said they might keep her bed; she did not at all mind lying in the drawer.

But the flowers said, "We thank you heartily, but in any way we cannot live long. To-morrow we shall be quite dead. But tell little Ida she is to bury us out in the garden, where the canary lies; then we shall wake up again in summer, and be far more beautiful."

"No, you must not die," said Sophy; and she kissed the flowers.

Then the room door opened, and a great number of splendid flowers came dancing in. Ida could not imagine whence they had come; these must certainly all be flowers from the king's castle yonder. First of all came two glorious roses, and they had little gold crowns on; they were a king and a queen. Then came the prettiest stocks and carnations; and they bowed in all directions. They had music with them. Great poppies and peonies blew upon pea-pods till they were quite red in the face. The blue hyacinths and the little white snowdrops rang just as if they had been bells. That was wonderful music! Then came many other flowers, and danced all together; the blue violets and the pink primroses, daisies and the lilies of the valley. And all the flowers kissed one another. It was beautiful to look at!

At last the flowers wished one another good-night; then little Ida, too, crept to bed, where she dreamed of all she had seen.

When she rose next morning, she went quickly to the little table, to see if the pretty flowers were still there. She drew aside the curtains of the little bed; there were they all, but they were quite faded, far more than yesterday. Sophy was lying in the drawer where Ida had laid her; she looked very sleepy.

"Do you remember what you were to say to me?" asked little Ida.

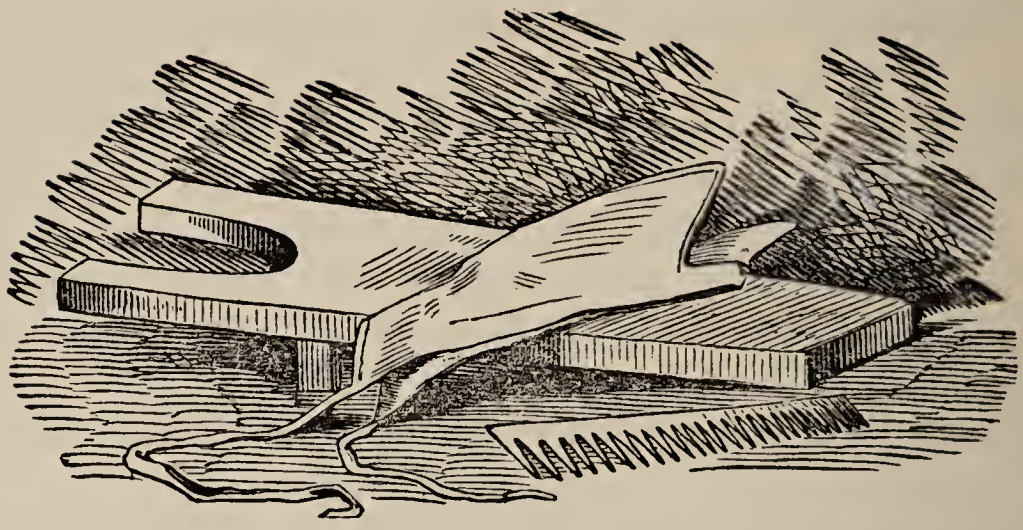
But Sophy looked quite stupid, and did not say a single word.

"You are not good at all!" said Ida. "And yet they all danced with you."

Then she took a little paper box, on which were painted beautiful birds, and opened it, and laid the dead flowers in it.

"That shall be your pretty coffin," said she, "and when my cousins come to visit me by and by, they shall help me to bury you outside in the garden, so that you may grow again in summer, and become more beautiful than ever."

These cousins were two merry boys. Their names were Gustave and Adolphe; their father had given them two new cross-bows, and they had brought these with them to show to Ida. She told them about the poor flowers which had died, and then they got leave to bury them. The two boys went first, with their cross-bows on their shoulders, and little Ida followed with the dead flowers in the pretty box. Out in the garden a little grave was dug. Ida first kissed the flowers, and then laid them in the earth in the box, and Adolphe and Gustave shot with their cross-bows over the grave, for they had neither guns nor cannons.



THE FALSE COLLAR.

THERE was once a fine gentleman, whose whole movables were a Boot-jack and a Hair-comb: but he had the finest False Collars in the world; and it is about one of these Collars that we are now to hear a story.

It was so old, that it began to think of marriage; and it happened, that it came to be washed in company with a Garter.

"Nay!" said the Collar, "I never did see anything so slender and so fine, so soft and so neat. May I not ask your name?"

"That I shall not tell you!" said the Garter.

"Where do you live?" asked the Collar.

But the Garter was so bashful, so modest, and thought it was a strange question to answer.

"You are certainly a girdle," said the Collar; "that is to say, an inside girdle. I see well that you are both for use and ornament, my dear young lady."

"I will thank you not to speak to me," said the Garter. "I think I have not given the least occasion for it."

"Yes! when one is as handsome as you," said the Collar, "that is occasion enough."

"Don't come so near me, I beg of you!" said the Garter. "You look so much like those men-folks."

"I am also a fine gentleman," said the Collar. "I have a Boot-jack and a Hair-comb."

But that was not true, for it was his master who had them: but he boasted.

"Don't come so near me," said the Garter: "I am not accustomed to it."

"Prude!" exclaimed the Collar; and then it was taken out of the washing-tub. It was starched, hung over the back of a chair in the sunshine, and was then laid on the ironing-blanket; then came the warm box-iron. "Dear lady!" said the Collar. "Dear widow lady! I feel quite hot. I am quite changed. I begin to unfold myself. You will burn a hole in me. O! I offer you my hand."

"Rag!" said the Box-iron; and went proudly over the Collar: for she fancied she was a steam-engine, that should go on the railroad and draw the wagons. "Rag!" said the Box-iron.

The Collar was a little jagged at the edge, and so came the long Scissors to cut off the jagged part.

"O!" said the Collar, "you are certainly the first opera dancer. How well you can stretch your legs out! It is the most graceful performance I have ever seen. No one can imitate you."

"I know it," said the Scissors.

"You deserve to be a baroness," said the Collar. "All that I have, is a fine gentleman, a Boot-jack, and a Hair-comb. If I only had the barony!"

"Do you seek my hand?" said the Scissors; for she was angry; and, without more ado, she *cut him;* and then he was condemned.

"I shall now be obliged to ask the Hair-comb. — It is surprising how well you preserve your teeth, Miss," said the Collar. "Have you never thought of being betrothed?"

"Yes, of course! you may be sure of that," said the Hair-comb. "I *am* betrothed — to the Boot-jack!"

"Betrothed!" exclaimed the Collar. Now there was no other to court, and so he despised it.

A long time passed away, then the Collar came into the rag chest at the paper mill; there was a large company of rags, the fine by themselves, and the coarse by themselves, just as it should be. They all had much to say, but the Collar the most, for he was a real boaster.

"I have had such an immense number of sweethearts!" said the Collar, "I could not be in peace! It is true, I was also a fine starched-up gentleman! I had both a Boot-jack and a Hair-comb, which I never used! You should have seen me then: you should have seen me when I lay down! I shall never forget my first love, she was a Girdle, so fine so soft, and so charming; she threw herself into a tub of water for my sake. There was also a widow, who became glowing hot, but I left her standing till she got black again; there was also the first opera dancer, she gave me that cut which I now go with, she was so ferocious! My own Hair-comb was in love with me; she lost all her teeth from the heart-ache; yes I have lived to see much of that sort of thing but I am extremely sorry for the Garter — I mean the girdle — that went into the water-tub. I have much on my conscience; I want to become white paper!"

And it became so, all the rags were turned into white paper; but the collar came to be just this very piece of white paper we here see, and on which the story is printed; and that was because it boasted so terribly afterwards of what had never happened to it. It would be well for us to beware, that we may not act in a similar manner, for we can never know if we may not, in the course of time, also come into the rag chest, and be made into white paper, and then have our whole life's history printed on it, even the most secret, and be obliged to run about and tell it ourselves, just like this Collar

THE LEAP-FROG.

A FLEA, a Grasshopper, and a Leap-frog once wanted to see which could jump highest; and they invited the whole world, and everybody else besides who chose to come, to see the festival. Three famous jumpers were they, as every one would say, when they all met together in the room.

"I will give my daughter to him who jumps highest," exclaimed the King; "for it is not so amusing where there is no prize to jump for."

The Flea was the first to step forward. He had exquisite manners, and bowed to the company on all sides; for he had noble blood, and was, moreover, accustomed to the society of man alone; and that makes a great difference.

Then came the Grasshopper. He was considerably heavier, but he was well-mannered, and wore a green uniform, which he had by right of birth; he said, moreover, that he belonged to a very ancient Egyptian family, and that in the house where he then was he was thought much of. The fact was, he had been just brought out of the fields, and put in a pasteboard house, three stories high, all made of court-cards with the colored side inwards; and doors and windows cut out of the

body of the Queen of Hearts. "I sing so well," said he, "that sixteen native grasshoppers who have chirped from infancy, and yet got no house built of cards to live in, grew thinner than they were before for sheer vexation when they heard me."

It was thus that the Flea and the Grasshopper gave an account of themselves, and thought they were quite good enough to marry a princess.

The Leap-frog said nothing; but people gave it as their opinion that he therefore thought the more; and when the house-dog snuffed at him with his nose, he confessed the Leap-frog was of good family. The old councilor, who had had three orders given him to make him hold his tongue, asserted that the Leap-frog was a prophet; for that one could see on his back if there would be a severe or mild winter, and that was what one could not see even on the back of the man who writes the almanac.

"I say nothing, it is true," exclaimed the King; "but I have my own opinion notwithstanding."

Now the trial was to take place. The Flea jumped so high that nobody could see where he went to; so they all asserted he had not jumped at all; and that was dishonorable.

The Grasshopper jumped only half as high; but he leaped into the King's face, who said that was ill-mannered.

The Leap-frog stood still for a long time lost in thought; it was believed at last he would not jump at all.

"I only hope he is not unwell," said the House-dog; when, pop! he made a jump all on one side into the lap of the Princess, who was sitting on a little golden stool close by.

Hereupon the King said, "There is nothing above my daughter; therefore to bound up to her is the highest jump that can be made: but for this, one must possess understanding, and the Leap-frog has shown that he *has* understanding. He is brave and intellectual."

And so he won the Princess.

"It's all the same to me," said the Flea; "she may have the old Leap-frog, for all I care. I jumped the highest; but in this world merit seldom meets its reward. A fine exterior is what people look at nowadays."

The Flea then went into foreign service, where, it is said, he was killed.

The Grasshopper sat without on a green bank, and reflected on worldly things; and he said too, "Yes, a fine exterior is everything — a fine exterior is what people care about." And then he began chirping his peculiar melancholy song, from which we have taken this history; and which may, very possibly, be all untrue, although it does stand here printed in black and white.

34

THE ANGEL.

WHENEVER a good child dies, an angel from heaven comes down to earth and takes the dead child in his arms, spreads out his great white wings, and flies away over all the places the child has loved, and picks quite a handful of flowers, which he carries up to the Almighty, that they may bloom in heaven more brightly than on earth. And the Father presses all the flowers to His heart; but He kisses the flower that pleases Him best, and the flower is then endowed with a voice, and can join in the great chorus of praise!

"See"—this is what an Angel said, as he carried a dead child up to heaven, and the Child heard, as if in a dream; and they went on over the regions of home where the little Child had played, and came through gardens with beautiful flowers—"which of these shall we take with us to plant in heaven?" asked the Angel.

Now, there stood near them a slender, beautiful rose-bush; but a wicked hand had broken the stem, so that all the branches, covered with half-opened buds, were hanging around, quite withered.

"The poor rose-bush!" said the Child. "Take it, that it may bloom up yonder."

And the Angel took it, and kissed the Child, and the little one half opened his eyes. They plucked some of the rich flowers, but als otook with them the wild pansy and the despised buttercup.

"Now we have flowers," said the Child.

And the Angel nodded, but he did not yet fly upward to heaven. It was night and quite silent. They remained in the great city; they floated about there in a small street, where lay whole heaps of straw, ashes, and sweepings, for it had been removal day. There lay fragments of plates, bits of plaster, rags, and old hats, and all this did not look well. And the Angel pointed amid all this confusion to a few fragments of a flower-pot, and to a lump of earth which had fallen out, and which was kept together by the roots of a great dried field flower, which was of no use, and had therefore been thrown out into the street.

"We will take that with us," said the Angel. "I will tell you why, as we fly onward.

"Down yonder in the narrow lane, in the low cellar, lived a poor sick boy; from his childhood he had been bedridden. When he was at his best he could go up and down the room a few times, leaning on crutches; that was the utmost he could do. For a few days in summer the sunbeams would penetrate for a few hours to the ground of the cellar, and when the poor boy sat there and the sun shone on him, and he looked at the red blood in his three fingers, as he held them up before his face, he would say, 'Yes, to-day he has been out!' He knew the forest with its beautiful vernal green only from the fact that the neighbor's little son brought him the first green branch of a beech-tree, and he held that up over his head, and dreamed he was in the beech wood, where the sun shone and the birds sang. On a spring day the neighbor's boy brought him also field flowers, and among them was, by chance, one to which the root was still hanging; and so it was planted in a flower-pot, and placed by the bed, close to the window. And the flower had been planted by a fortunate hand; and it grew, threw out new shoots, and bore flowers every year. It became a splendid flower garden to the sickly boy — his little treasure here on earth. He watered

it, and tended it, and took care that it had the benefit of every ray of sunlight, down to the latest that struggled in through the narrow window; and the flower itself was woven into his dreams, for it grew for him and gladdened his eyes, and spread its fragrance about him; and toward it he turned in death, when the Father called him. He has now been with the Almighty for a year; for a year the flower has stood forgotten in the window, and is withered; and thus, at the removal, it has been thrown out into the dust of the street. And this is the poor flower which we have taken into our nosegay; for this flower has given more joy than the richest in a queen's garden."

"But how do you know all this?" asked the Child.

"I know it," said the Angel, "for I myself was that boy who walked on crutches. I know my flower well."

And the Child opened his eyes and looked into the glorious, happy face of the Angel; and at the same moment they entered the regions where there is peace and joy. And the Father pressed the dead Child to His bosom, and then it received wings like the Angel, and flew hand in hand with him. And the Almighty kissed the dry withered field flower, and it received a voice and sang with all the angels hovering around — some near, and some in wider circles, and some in infinite distance, but all equally happy. And they all sang — little and great, the good, happy Child, and the poor field flower that had lain there withered, thrown among the dust. in the rubbish of the removal day, in the dark narrow lane.

THE FLYING TRUNK.

THERE was once a merchant, who was so rich that he could pave the whole street with gold, and almost have enough left for a little lane. But he did not do that; he knew how to employ his money differently. When he spent a shilling he got back a crown, such a clever merchant was he; and this continued till he died.

His son now got all this money; and he lived merrily, going to the masquerade every evening, making kites out of dollar notes, and playing at ducks and drakes on the sea-coast with gold pieces instead of pebbles. In this way the money might soon be spent, and indeed it was so. At last he had no more than four shillings left, and no clothes to wear but a pair of slippers and an old dressing-gown. Now his friends did not trouble themselves any more about him, as they could not walk with him in the street, but one of them, who was good-natured, sent him an old trunk, with the remark, "Pack up!" Yes, that was all very well, but he had nothing to pack, therefore he seated himself in the trunk.

That was a wonderful trunk. So soon as any one pressed the lock the trunk could fly. He pressed it, and *whirr!* away flew the trunk with him through the chimney and over the

clouds, farther and farther away. But as often as the bottom of the trunk cracked a little he was in great fear lest it might go to pieces, and then he would have flung a fine somersault! In that way he came to the land of the Turks. He hid the trunk in a wood under some dry leaves, and then went into the town. He could do that very well, for among the Turks all the people went about dressed like himself in dressing-gown and slippers. Then he met a nurse with a little child.

"Here, you Turkish nurse," he began, "what kind of a great castle is that close by the town, in which the windows are so high up?"

"There dwells the Sultan's daughter," replied she. "It is prophesied that she will be very unhappy respecting a lover; and therefore nobody may go near her, unless the Sultan and Sultana are there too."

"Thank you!" said the Merchant's Son; and he went out into the forest, seated himself in his trunk, flew on the roof, and crept through the window into the Princess's room.

She was lying asleep on the sofa, and she was so beautiful that the Merchant's Son was compelled to kiss her. Then she awoke, and was startled very much; but he said he was a Turkish angel who had come down to her through the air, and that pleased her.

They sat down side by side, and he told her stories about her eyes; and he told her they were the most glorious dark lakes, and that thoughts were swimming about in them like mermaids. And he told her about her forehead; that it was a snowy mountain with the most splendid halls and pictures. And he told her about the stork who brings the lovely little children.

Yes, those were fine histories! Then he asked the Princess if she would marry him, and she said "Yes," directly.

"But you must come here on Saturday," said she. "Then the Sultan and Sultana will be here to tea. They will be very proud that I am to marry a Turkish angel. But take care that you know a very pretty story, for both my parents are very fond indeed of stories. My mother likes them high-flown and moral, but my father likes them merry, so that one can laugh."

"Yes, I shall bring no marriage gift but a story," said he; and so they parted. But the Princess gave him a sabre, the sheath embroidered with gold pieces, and that was very useful to him.

Now he flew away, bought a new dressing-gown, and sat in the forest and made up a story; it was to be ready by Saturday, and that was not an easy thing.

By the time he had finished it Saturday had come. The Sultan and his wife and all the court were at the Princess's to tea. He was received very graciously.

"Will you relate us a story?" said the Sultana; "one that is deep and edifying."

"Yes, but one that we can laugh at," said the Sultan.

"Certainly," he replied; and so began. And now listen well.

"There was once a bundle of Matches, and these Matches were particularly proud of their high descent. Their genealogical tree, that is to say, the great fir-tree of which each of them was a little splinter, had been a great old tree out in the forest. The Matches now lay between a Tinder-box and an old Iron Pot; and they were telling about the days of their youth. 'Yes, when we were upon the green boughs,' they said, 'then we really were upon the green boughs! Every morning and evening there was diamond tea for us, — I mean dew; we had sunshine all day long whenever the sun shone, and all the little birds had to tell stories. We could see very well that we were rich, for the other trees were only dressed out in summer, while our family had the means to wear green dresses in the winter as well. But then the wood-cutter came, like a great revolution, and our family was broken up. The head of the family got an appointment as mainmast in a first-rate ship, which could sail round the world if necessary; the other branches went to other places, and now we have the office of kindling a light for the vulgar herd. That's how we grand people came to be in the kitchen.'

"'My fate was of different kind,' said the Iron Pot, which stood next to the Matches. 'From the beginning, ever since I came into the world, there has been a great deal of scouring and cooking done in me. I look after the practical part, and

am the first here in the house. My only pleasure is to sit in my place after dinner, very clean and neat, and to carry on a sensible conversation with my comrades. But except the Water-pot, which is sometimes taken down into the court-yard, we always live within our four walls. Our only newsmonger is the Market Basket; but he speaks very uneasily about the government and the people. Yes, the other day there was an old pot that fell down, from fright, and burst. He's liberal, I can tell you!'—'Now you're talking too much,' the Tinder-box interrupted, and the steel struck against the flint, so that sparks flew out. 'Shall we not have a merry evening?'

"'Yes, let us talk about who is the grandest,' said the Matches.

"'No, I don't like to talk about myself,' retorted the Pot. 'Let us get up an evening entertainment. I will begin. I will tell a story from real life, something that every one has experienced, so that we can easily imagine the situation, and take pleasure in it. On the Baltic, by the Danish shore'—

"'That's a pretty beginning!' cried all the Plates. 'That will be a story we shall like.'

"'Yes, it happened to me in my youth, when I lived in a family where the furniture was polished, the floors scoured, and new curtains were put up every fortnight.'

"'What an interesting way you have of telling a story!' said the Carpet Broom. 'One can tell directly that a man is speaking who has been in woman's society. There's something pure runs through it.'

"And the Pot went on telling his story, and the end was as good as the beginning.

"All the Plates rattled with joy, and the Carpet Broom brought some green parsley out of the dust-hole, and put it like a wreath on the Pot, for he knew that it would vex the others. 'If I crown him to-day,' it thought, 'he will crown me to-morrow.'

"'Now I'll dance,' said the Fire Tongs; and they danced. Preserve us! how that implement could lift up one leg! The old chair-cushion burst to see it. 'Shall I be crowned too?' thought the Tongs; and indeed a wreath was awarded.

"'They're only common people, after all!' thought the Matches.

"Now the Tea-urn was to sing; but she said she had take cold, and could not sing unless she felt boiling within. But that was only affectation: she did not want to sing, except when she was in the parlor with the grand people.

"In the window sat an old Quill Pen, with which the maid generally wrote: there was nothing remarkable about this pen, except that it had been dipped too deep into the ink, but she was proud of that. 'If the Tea-urn won't sing,' she said, 'she may leave it alone. Outside hangs a nightingale in a cage, and he can sing. He hasn't had any education, but this evening we'll say nothing about that.'

"'I think it very wrong,' said the Tea-kettle — he was the kitchen singer, and half-brother to the Tea-urn — 'that that rich and foreign bird should be listened to! Is that patriotic? Let the Market Basket decide.'

"'I am vexed,' said the Market Basket. 'No one can imagine how much I am secretly vexed. Is that a proper way of spending the evening? Would it not be more sensible to put the house in order? Let each one go to his own place, and I will arrange the whole game. That would be quite another thing.'

"'Yes, let us make a disturbance,' cried they all. Then the door opened, and the maid came in, and they all stood still; not one stirred. But there was not one pot among them who did not know what he could do, and how grand he was. 'Yes, if I had liked,' each one thought, 'it might have been a very merry evening.'

"The servant girl took the Matches and lighted the fire with them. Mercy! how they sputtered and burst out into flame! 'Now every one can see,' thought they, 'that we are the first. How we shine! what a light!'— and they burned out."

"That was a capital story," said the Sultana. "I feel myself quite carried away to the kitchen, to the Matches. Yes, now thou shalt marry our daughter."

"Yes, certainly," said the Sultan, "thou shalt marry our daughter on Monday."

And they called him *thou*, because he was to belong to the family.

The wedding was decided on, and on the evening before it the whole city was illuminated. Biscuits and cakes were thrown among the people, the street boys stood on their toes, called out "Hurrah!" and whistled on their fingers. It was uncommonly splendid.

"Yes, I shall have to give something as a treat," thought the Merchant's Son. So he bought rockets and crackers, and every imaginable sort of fire-work, put them all into his trunk, and flew up into the air.

"Crack!" how they went, and how they went off! All the Turks hopped up with such a start that their slippers flew about their ears; such a meteor they had never yet seen. Now they could understand that it must be a Turkish angel who was going to marry the Princess.

What stories people tell! Every one whom he asked about it had seen it in a separate way; but one and all thought it fine.

"I saw the Turkish angel himself," said one. "He had eyes like glowing stars, and a beard like foaming water."

"He flew up in a fiery mantle," said another; "the most lovely little cherub peeped forth from among the folds."

Yes, they were wonderful things that he heard; and on the following day he was to be married.

Now he went back to the forest to rest himself in his trunk. But what had become of that? A spark from the fire-works had set fire to it, and the trunk was burned to ashes. He could not fly any more, and could not get to his bride.

She stood all day on the roof waiting; and most likely she is waiting still. But he wanders through the world, telling fairy tales; but they are not so merry as that one he told about the Matches.

THE TINDER-BOX.

THERE came a Soldier marching along the high road —*one, two! one, two!* He had his knapsack on his back and a sabre by his side, for he had been in the wars, and now he wanted to go home. And on the way he met with an old Witch: she was very hideous, and her under lip hung down upon her breast. She said, "Good evening, Soldier. What a fine sword you have, and what a big knapsack! You're a proper soldier! Now you shall have as much money as you like to have."

"I thank you, you old Witch!" said the Soldier.

"Do you see that great tree?" quoth the Witch; and she pointed to a tree which stood beside them. "It's quite hollow inside. You must climb to the top, and then you'll see a hole, through which you can let yourself down and get deep into the tree. I'll tie a rope round your body, so that I can pull you up again when you call me."

"What am I to do down in the tree?" asked the Soldier.

"Get money," replied the Witch. "Listen to me. When you come down to the earth under the tree, you will find

yourself in a great hall: it is quite light, for above three hundred lamps are burning there. Then you will see three doors; these you can open, for the keys are hanging there. If you go into the first chamber, you'll see a great chest in the middle of the floor; on this chest sits a dog, and he's got a pair of eyes as big as two tea-cups. But you need not care for that. I'll give you my blue checked apron, and you can spread it out upon the floor; then go up quickly and take the dog, and set him on my apron; then open the chest, and take as many shillings as you like. They are of copper: if you prefer silver, you must go into the second chamber. But there sits a dog with a pair of eyes as big as mill-wheels. But do not you care for that. Set him upon my apron, and take some of the money. And if you want gold, you can have that too — in fact, as much as you can carry — if you go into the third chamber. But the dog that sits on the money-chest there has two eyes as big as round towers. He is a fierce dog, you may be sure; but you needn't be afraid, for all that. Only set him on my apron, and he won't hurt you; and take out of the chest as much gold as you like."

"That's not so bad," said the Soldier. "But what am I to give you, you old Witch? for you will not do it for nothing, I fancy."

"No," replied the Witch, "not a single shilling will I have. You shall only bring me an old Tinder-box which my grandmother forgot when she was down there last."

"Then tie the rope round my body," cried the Soldier.

"Here it is," said the Witch, "and here's my blue checked apron."

Then the Soldier climbed up into the tree, let himself slip down into the hole, and stood, as the Witch had said, in the great hall where the three hundred lamps were burning.

Now he opened the first door. Ugh! there sat the dog with eyes as big as tea-cups, staring at him. "You're a nice fellow!" exclaimed the Soldier; and he set him on the Witch's apron, and took as many copper shillings as his pockets would hold, and then locked the chest, set the dog on it again, and went into the second chamber. Aha! there sat the dog with eyes as big as mill-wheels.

"You should not stare so hard at me," said the Soldier; "you might strain your eyes." And he set the dog upon the Witch's apron. And when he saw the silver money in the chest, he threw away all the copper money he had, and filled his pockets and his knapsack with silver only. Then he went into the third chamber. O, but that was horrid! The dog there really had eyes as big as towers, and they turned round and round in his head like wheels.

"Good evening!" said the Soldier; and he touched his cap, for he had never seen such a dog as that before. When he had looked at him a little more closely, he thought, "That will do," and lifted him down to the floor, and opened the chest. Mercy! what a quantity of gold was there! He could buy with it the whole town, and the sugar sucking-pigs of the cake woman, and all the tin soldiers, whips, and rocking-horses in the whole world. Yes, that was a quantity of money! Now the Soldier threw away all the silver coin with which he had filled his pockets and his knapsack, and took gold instead: yes, all his pockets, his knapsack, his boots, and his cap were filled, so that he could scarcely walk. Now indeed he had plenty of money. He put the dog on the chest, shut the door, and then called up through the tree, "Now pull me up, you old Witch."

"Have you the Tinder-box?" asked the Witch.

"Plague on it!" exclaimed the Soldier, "I had clean forgotten that." And he went and brought it.

The Witch drew him up, and he stood on the high road again, with pockets, boots, knapsack, and cap full of gold.

"What are you going to do with the Tinder-box?" asked the Soldier.

"That's nothing to you," retorted the Witch. "You've had your money; just give me the Tinder-box."

"Nonsense!" said the Soldier. "Tell me directly what you're going to do with it or I'll draw my sword and cut off your head."

"No!" cried the Witch.

So the Soldier cut off her head. There she lay! But he tied up all his money in her apron, took it on his back like a bundle, put the Tinder-box in his pocket, and went straight off toward the town.

That was a splendid town! And he put up at the very best inn, and asked for the finest rooms, and ordered his favorite dishes, for now he was rich, as he had so much money. The servant who had to clean his boots certainly thought them a remarkably old pair for such a rich gentleman; but he had not bought any new ones yet. The next day he procured proper boots and handsome clothes. Now our Soldier had become a fine gentleman; and the people told him of all the splendid things which were in their city, and about the King, and what a pretty Princess the King's daughter was.

"Where can one get to see her?" asked the Soldier.

"She is not to be seen at all," said they all together; "she lives in a great copper castle, with a great many walls and towers round about it: no one but the king may go in and out there, for it has been prophesied that she shall marry a common soldier, and the King can't bear that."

"I should like to see her," thought the Soldier; but he could not get leave to do so. Now he lived merrily, went to the theatre, drove in the King's garden, and gave much money to the poor; and this was very kind of him, for he knew from old times how hard it is when one has not a shilling. Now he was rich, had fine clothes, and gained many friends, who all said he was a rare one, a true cavalier; and that pleased the Soldier well. But as he spent money every day and never earned any, he had at last only two shillings left; and he was obliged to turn out of the fine rooms in which he had dwelt, and had to live in a little garret under the roof, and clean his boots for himself, and mend them with a darning-needle None of his friends came to see him, for there were too many stairs to climb.

It was quite dark one evening, and he could not even buy himself a candle, when it occurred to him that there was a candle-end in the Tinder-box which he had taken out of the hollow tree into which the Witch had helped him. He brought out the Tinder-box and the candle end; but as soon as he struck fire and the sparks rose up from the flint, the door flew open, and the dog who had eyes as big as a couple of tea-cups, and whom he had seen in the tree, stood before him, and said, —

"What are my lord's commands?"

"What is this?" said the Soldier. "That's a famous Tinder-box, if I can get everything with it that I want! Bring me some money," said he to the dog; and *whisk!* the dog was gone, and *whisk!* he was back again, with a great bag full of shillings in his mouth.

Now the Soldier knew what a capital Tinder-box this was. If he struck it once, the dog came who sat upon the chest of copper money; if he struck it twice, the dog came who had the silver; and if he struck it three times, then appeared the dog who had the gold. Now the Soldier moved back into the fine rooms, and appeared again in handsome clothes; and all his friends knew him again, and cared very much for him indeed.

Once he thought to himself, "It is a very strange thing that one cannot get to see the Princess. They all say she is very beautiful; but what is the use of that, if she has always to sit in the great copper castle with the many towers? Can I not get to see her at all? Where is my Tinder-box?" And so he struck a light, and *whisk!* came the dog with eyes as big as tea-cups.

"It is midnight, certainly," said the Soldier, "but I should very much like to see the Princess, only for one little moment."

And the dog was outside the door directly, and, before the Soldier thought it, came back with the Princess. She sat upon the dog's back and slept; and every one could see she was a real princess, for she was so lovely. The Soldier could not refrain from kissing her, for he was a thorough soldier. Then the dog ran back again with the Princess. But when morning came, and the King and Queen were drinking tea, the Princess said she had had a strange dream the night before, about a dog and a soldier — that she had ridden upon the dog, and the soldier had kissed her.

"That would be a fine history!" said the Queen.

So one of the old court ladies had to watch the next night by the Princess's bed, to see if this was really a dream, or what it might be.

The Soldier had a great longing to see the lovely Princess again; so the dog came in the night, took her away, and ran as fast as he could. But the old lady put on water-boots, and

ran just as fast after him. When she saw that they both entered a great house, she thought, "Now I know where it is;" and with a bit of chalk she drew a great cross on the door. Then she went home and lay down, and the dog came up with the Princess; but when he saw that there was a cross drawn on the door where the Soldier lived, he took a piece of chalk too, and drew crosses on all the doors in the town. And that was cleverly done, for now the lady could not find the right door, because all the doors had crosses upon them.

In the morning early came the King and the Queen, the old court lady and all the officers, to see where it was the Princess had been. "Here it is!" said the King, when he saw the first door with a cross upon it. "No, my dear husband, it is there!" said the Queen, who descried another door which also showed a cross. "But there is one, and there is one!" said all, for wherever they looked there were crosses on the doors. So they saw that it would avail them nothing if they searched on.

But the Queen was an exceedingly clever woman, who could do more than ride in a coach. She took her great gold scissors, cut a piece of silk into pieces, and made a neat little bag; this bag she filled with fine wheat flour, and tied it on the Princess's back; and when that was done, she cut a little hole in the bag, so that the flour would be scattered along all the way which the Princess should take.

In the night the dog came again, took the Princess on his back, and ran with her to the Soldier, who loved her very much, and would gladly have been a prince, so that he might have her for his wife. The dog did not notice at all how the flour ran out in a stream from the castle to the windows of the Soldier's house, where he ran up the wall with the Princess. In the morning the King and the Queen saw well enough where their daughter had been, and they took the Soldier and put him in prison.

There he sat. O, but it was dark and disagreeable there! And they said to him, "To-morrow you shall be hanged." That was not amusing to hear, and he had left his Tinder-box at the inn. In the morning he could see, through the iron grating of the little window, how the people were hurrying out

of the town to see him hanged. He heard the drums beat and saw the soldiers marching. All the people were running out, and among them was a shoemaker's boy with leather apron and slippers, and he galloped so fast that one of his slippers flew off, and came right against the wall where the Soldier sat looking through the iron grating.

"Halloo, you shoemaker's boy! you needn't be in such a hurry," cried the Soldier to him: "it will not begin till I come. But if you will run to where I lived, and bring me my Tinder-box, you shall have four shillings: but you must put your best leg foremost."

The shoemaker's boy wanted to get the four shillings, so he went and brought the Tinder-box, and — well, we shall hear now what happened.

Outside the town a great gallows had been built, and round it stood the soldiers and many hundred thousand people. The King and Queen sat on a splendid throne, opposite to the judges and the whole council. The Soldier already stood upon the ladder; but as they were about to put the rope round his neck, he said that before a poor criminal suffered his punishment an innocent request was always granted to him. He wanted very much to smoke a pipe of tobacco, and it would be the last pipe he should smoke in the world. The King would not say "No" to this; so the Soldier took his Tinder-box, and struck fire. One — two, — three! — and there suddenly stood all the dogs — the one with eyes as big as tea-cups, the one with eyes as large as mill-wheels, and the one whose eyes were as big as round towers.

"Help me now, so that I may not be hanged," said the Soldier.

And the dogs fell upon the judges and all the council, seized one by the leg and another by the nose, and tossed them all many feet into the air, so that they fell down and were all broken to pieces.

"I won't!" cried the King; but the biggest dog took him and the Queen, and threw them after the others. Then the soldiers were afraid, and the people cried, "Little Soldier, you shall be our king, and marry the beautiful Princess!"

So they put the Soldier into the King's coach, and all the

three dogs darted on in front and cried "Hurrah!" and the boys whistled through their fingers, and the soldiers presented arms. The Princess came out of the copper castle, and became Queen, and she liked that well enough. The wedding lasted a week, and the three dogs sat at the table too, and opened their eyes wider than ever at all they saw.

THE BUCKWHEAT.

OFTEN, after a thunder-storm, when one passes a field in which buckwheat is growing, it appears quite blackened and singed. It is just as if a flame of fire had passed across it; and then the countryman says, "It got that from lightning." But whence has it received that? I will tell you what the sparrow told me about it, and the sparrow heard it from an old willow-tree which stood by a buckwheat field, and still stands there. It is quite a great venerable Willow-tree, but crippled and old: it is burst in the middle, and grass and brambles grow out of the cleft; the tree bends forward, and the branches hang quite down to the ground, as if they were long green hair.

On all the fields round about corn was growing, not only rye and barley, but also oats; yes, the most capital oats, which when ripe, looks like a number of little yellow canary birds sitting upon a spray. The corn stood smiling, and the richer an ear was the deeper did it bend in pious humility.

But there was also a field of buckwheat, and this field was exactly opposite to the old Willow-tree. The Buckwheat did

not bend at all, like the rest of the grain, but stood up proudly and stiffly.

"I'm as rich as any corn-ear," said he. "Moreover, I'm very much handsomer: my flowers are beautiful as the blossoms of the apple-tree: it's quite a delight to look upon me and mine. Do you know anything more splendid than we are, you old Willow-tree?"

And the Willow-tree nodded his head, just as if he would have said, "Yes, that's true enough!"

But the Buckwheat spread itself out from mere vainglory, and said, "The stupid tree! he's so old that the grass grows in his body."

Now a terrible storm came on: all the field flowers folded their leaves together or bowed their little heads while the storm passed over them, but the Buckwheat stood erect in its pride.

"Bend your head like us," said the Flowers.

"I've not the slightest cause to do so," replied the Buckwheat.

"Bend your head as we do," cried the various Crops. "Now the Storm comes flying on. He has wings that reach from the clouds just down to the earth, and he'll beat you in halves before you can cry for mercy."

"Yes, but I won't bend," quoth the Buckwheat.

"Shut up your flowers and bend your leaves," said the old Willow-tree. "Don't look up at the lightning when the cloud bursts: even men do not do that, for in the lightning one may look into heaven, but the light dazzles even men; and what would happen to us, if we dared do so — we, the plants of the field, that are much less worthy than they?"

"Much less worthy!" cried the Buckwheat. "Now I'll just look straight up into heaven."

And it did so, in its pride and vainglory. It was as if the whole world were on fire, so vivid was the lightning.

When afterwards the bad weather had passed by, the flowers and the crops stood in the still, pure air, quite refreshed by the rain; but the Buckwheat was burned coal-black by the lightning, and it was now like a dead weed upon the field.

And the old Willow-tree waved its branches in the wind,

and great drops of water fell down out of the green leaves, just as if the tree wept.

And the Sparrows asked, "Why do you weep? Here everything is so cheerful: see how the sun shines: see how the clouds sail on. Do you not breathe the scent of flowers and bushes? Why do you weep, Willow-tree?"

And the Willow-tree told them of the pride of the Buckwheat, of its vainglory, and of the punishment which always follows such sin.

I, who tell you this tale, have heard it from the sparrows. They told it me one evening when I begged them to give me a story.

THE BELL.

PEOPLE said, "The evening-bell is sounding, the sun is setting." A strange wondrous tone was heard in the narrow streets of a large town. It was like the sound of a church-bell: but it was only heard for a moment, for the rolling of the carriages, and the voices of the multitude made too great a noise.

Those persons who were walking without the town, where the houses were further apart, with gardens or little fields between them, could see the evening sky still better, and heard the sound of the bell much more distinctly. It was as if the tones came from a church in the still forest; people looked thitherward, and felt their minds attuned most solemnly.

A long time passed, and people said to each other, — "I wonder if there is a church out in the wood? The bell has a tone that is wondrous sweet; let us stroll thither, and examine the matter nearer." And the rich people drove out, and the poor walked, but the way seemed strangely long to them; and when they came to a clump of willows which grew on the skirts of the forest, they sat down, and looked up at the long branches, and fancied they were now in the depth of the green

wood. The confectioner of the town came out, and set up his booth there; and soon after came another confectioner, who hung a bell over his stand, as a sign or ornament, but it had no clapper, and it was tarred over to preserve it from the rain. When all the people returned home, they said it had been very romantic, and that it was quite a different sort of thing to a picnic or tea-party. There were three persons who asserted they had penetrated to the end of the forest, and that they had always heard the wonderful sounds of the bell, but it had seemed to them as if it had come from the town. One wrote a whole poem about it, and said the bell sounded like the voice of a mother to a good dear child, and that no melody was sweeter than the tones of the bell. The king of the country was also observant of it, and vowed that he who could discover whence the sounds proceeded, should have the title of "Universal Bell-ringer," even if it were not really a bell.

Many persons now went to the wood, for the sake of getting the place, but one only returned with a sort of explanation; for nobody went far enough, that one not farther than the others. However, he said that the sound proceeded from a very large owl, in a hollow tree; a sort of learned owl, that continually knocked its head against the branches. But whether the sound came from his head or from the hollow tree, that, no one could say with certainty. So now he got the place of "Universal Bell-ringer," and wrote yearly a short treatise "On the Owl;" but everybody was just as wise as before.

It was the day of Confirmation. The clergyman had spoken so touchingly, the children who were confirmed had been greatly moved; it was an eventful day for them; from children they became all at once grown-up persons; it was as if their infant souls were now to fly all at once into persons with more understanding. The sun was shining gloriously; the children that had been confirmed went out of the town, and from the wood was borne toward them the sounds of the unknown bell with wonderful distinctness. They all immediately felt a wish to go thither; all except three. One of them had to go home to try on a ball-dress, for it was just the dress and the ball which had caused her to be confirmed this

time, for otherwise she would not have come; the other was a poor boy, who had borrowed his coat and boots to be confirmed in from the innkeeper's son, and he was to give them back by a certain hour; the third said that he never went to a strange place if his parents were not with him; that he had always been a good boy hitherto, and would still be so now that he was confirmed, and that one ought not to laugh at him for it: the others, however, did make fun of him, after all.

There were three, therefore, that did not go; the others hastened on. The sun shone, the birds sang, and the children sang too, and each held the other by the hand; for as yet they had none of them any high office, and were all of equal rank in the eye of God.

But two of the youngest soon grew tired, and both returned to town; two little girls sat down, and twined garlands, so they did not go either; and when the others reached the willow-tree, where the confectioner was, they said, "Now we are there! In reality the bell does not exist; it is only a fancy that people have taken into their heads!"

At the same moment the bell sounded deep in the wood, so clear and solemnly that five or six determined to penetrate somewhat further. It was so thick, and the foliage so dense that it was quite fatiguing to proceed. Woodroof and anemones grew almost too high; blooming convolvuluses and blackberry-bushes hung in long garlands from tree to tree, where the nightingale sang and the sunbeams were playing: it was very beautiful, but it was no place for girls to go; their clothes would get so torn. Large blocks of stone lay there, overgrown with moss of every color; the fresh spring bubbled forth, and made a strange gurgling sound.

"That surely cannot be the bell," said one of the children, lying down and listening; "this must be looked to." So he remained, and let the others go on without him.

They afterwards came to a little house, made of branches and the bark of trees; a large wild apple-tree bent over it, as if it would shower down all its blessings on the roof, where roses were blooming. The long stems twined round the gable, on which there hung a small bell.

Was it that which people had heard? Yes: everbody was

unanimous on the subject, except one, who said that the bell was too small and too fine to be heard at so great a distance, and besides, it had very different tones from those that could move a human heart in such a manner. It was a king's son who spoke; whereon the others said, "Such people always want to be wiser than everybody else."

They now let him go on alone; and as he went, his breast was filled more and more with the forest solitude; but he still heard the little bell with which the others were so satisfied, and now and then, when the wind blew, he could also hear the people singing who were sitting at tea where the confectioner had his tent; but the deep sound of the bell rose louder; it was almost as if an organ were accompanying it, and the tones came from the left hand, the side where the heart is placed. A rustling was heard in the bushes, and a little boy stood before the King's Son; a boy in wooden shoes, and with so short a jacket that one could see what long wrists he had. Both knew each other; the boy was that one among the children who could not come because he had to go home and return his jacket and boots to the innkeeper's son. This he had done, and was now going on in wooden shoes and in his humbler dress, for the bell sounded with so deep a tone, and with such strange power, that proceed he must.

"Why, then, we can go together," said the King's Son. But the poor child that had been confirmed was quite ashamed; he looked at his wooden shoes, pulled at the short sleeves of his jacket, and said, "He was afraid he could not walk so fast; besides, he thought that the bell must be looked for to the right; for that was the place where all sorts of beautiful things were to be found."

"But there we shall not meet," said the King's Son, nodding at the same time to the Poor Boy, who went into the darkest, thickest part of the wood, where thorns tore his humble dress, and scratched his face, and hands, and feet, till they bled. The King's Son got some scratches, too; but the sun shone on his path, and it is him that we will follow, for he was an excellent and resolute youth.

"I must and will find the bell," said he, "even if I am obliged to go to the end of the world."

The ugly apes sat upon the trees, and grinned. "Shall we thrash him?" said they; "shall we thrash him? He is the son of a king!"

But on he went, without being disheartened, deeper and deeper into the wood, where the most wonderful flowers were growing. There stood white lilies with blood-red stamens; sky-blue tulips, which shone as they waved in the winds; and apple-trees, the apples of which looked exactly like large soap-bubbles: so only think how the trees must have sparkled in the sunshine! Around the nicest green meads, where the deer were playing in the grass, grew magnificent oaks and beeches; and if the bark of one of the trees was cracked, there grass and long creeping plants grew in the crevices. And there were large, calm lakes there too, in which white swans were swimming, and beat the air with their wings. The King's Son often stood still and listened. He thought the bell sounded from the depths of these still lakes; but then he remarked again that the tone proceeded not from there, but farther off, from out the depths of the forest.

The sun now set; the atmosphere glowed like fire. It was still in the woods, so very still; and he fell on his knees, sung his evening hymn, and said: "I cannot find what I seek; the sun is going down, and night is coming — the dark, dark night. Yet perhaps I may be able once more to see the round, red sun before he entirely disappears. I will climb up yonder rock."

And he seized hold of the creeping-plants, and the roots of trees, — climbed up the moist stones where the water-snakes were writhing and the toads were croaking — and he gained the summit before the sun had quite gone down. How magnificent was the sight from this height! The sea — the great, the glorious sea, that dashed its long waves against the coast — was stretched out before him. And yonder, where sea and sky meet, stood the sun, like a large, shining altar, all melted together in the most glowing colors. And the wood and the sea sang a song of rejoicing, and his heart sang with the rest: all nature was a vast, holy church, in which the trees and the buoyant clouds were the pillars, flowers and grass the velvet carpeting, and heaven itself the large cupola. The red colors

above faded away as the sun vanished, but a million stars were lighted, a million lamps shone; and the King's Son spread out his arms toward heaven, and wood, and sea; when at the same moment, coming by a path to the right, appeared, in his wooden shoes and jacket, the Poor Boy who had been confirmed with him. He had followed his own path, and had reached the spot just as soon as the Son of the King had done. They ran toward each other, and stood together, hand in hand, in the vast church of nature and of poetry, while over them sounded the invisible, holy bell; blessed spirits floated around them, and lifted up their voices in a rejoicing hallelujah!

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